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Popular Studies on the Canon of Scripture

BY THE

Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Ripon

Ven. Archdeacon Farrar, D.D. Very Rev. H. D. M. Spence, D.D.

Late Professor W. G. Elmslie, D.D. Prof. A. B. Davidson, D.D. LL.D.

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Prof. William Sanday, D.D. Prof. William Milligan, D.D.

Right Rev. the Bishop of Worcester

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P R E F A C E.

THESE studies originally appeared as Introductions to the various Books of Holy Scripture in “The New Illustrated Bible,” the last division of which has just been published by Messrs. J. S. Virtue & Co., Limited. The names of the authors furnish at once a clear indication and an ample guarantee of the character and quality of the essays; and the circumstance that it is now possible to issue in a single volume a complete and scholarly survey of the questions affecting the Sacred Canon which have of recent years caused so much anxiety, will, it is hoped, be considered a sufficient justification for reproducing them in the present popular form.

THE PUBLISHERS.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PENTATEUCH.

1. *Name and Divisions.*—The books of the Old Testament which relate the history of Israel had originally no titles. A continuous stream of narrative runs on from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Second Book of Kings; and the names by which the various parts of this narrative were designated are of later date than the time of composition, and were given on various grounds, as will be explained in the chapters on the respective books.

From very ancient times the first five books of the series were treated as one whole; and in the Synagogue Manuscripts, which give us a better idea of the early appearance of the Old Testament Scriptures than our printed Hebrew Bibles, they form one roll, divided not into books but into sections. The name given by the Jews to this collection is *Torah*, meaning *teaching* or *law*; more fully, the *Book of the Law*, or the *Law of Moses*. To indicate the five-fold division, they also called the whole the *Five-fifths of the Law*; and the early Christian Fathers, who received it in this form from the Jews, bestowed on it the name by which we now generally denote it, the *Pentateuch*, or *five-fold work*.

From the statement in Joshua xxiv. 26, that “Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God,” it may be inferred that some parts at least of that book were originally joined on to what preceded, and there are other features of the Book of Joshua that point to the same conclusion. Hence critics, in their investigations into the origin of the Old Testament books, are in the habit of speaking of the Hexateuch, or *six-fold work*. But the separate existence of the Pentateuch is very ancient, and the Samaritans, whose Pentateuch corresponds substantially with the Hebrew work, possess also a book of Joshua which

diverges very widely from the Hebrew book of that name. The five-fold division also is ancient, and seems to have given occasion to the division of the Psalter into five parts or books, as now represented in the Revised Version. The divisions are determined by the nature of the subject matter. Deuteronomy ends with the death of Moses, a well-defined point in the history of Israel; in like manner Genesis ends with the death of Joseph; Exodus brings the narrative down to the time when the Tabernacle was set up; and, though Leviticus and Numbers are more closely connected; they are marked off by a formal pause in the narration.

2. *Constituent Elements—Main Purpose.*—A very slight examination of the Pentateuch, in the form in which it has come down to us, is sufficient to show that it contains two great elements, narrative and legislation. The latter is so prominent a feature that the Jews, particularly on account of the turn which their religious life took, give the name of law to the whole collection. Yet it is evident that the narrative is the uniting bond, and the narration of history the main purpose throughout the books. We see this (1) in the mode in which the connection is striven after and maintained, so that not only is there a steady advance in each individual book, but the progression is clearly marked from book to book. It is seen also (2) in the manner in which laws and institutions are linked on to signal events which are narrated. Thus the Sabbath law is connected with the record of the Creation (Gen. ii. 1—3); the prohibition of blood with the preservation of Noah's family at the Flood (Gen. ix. 1—7); circumcision with the covenant of promise to Abraham (Gen. xvii. 1—14); the Passover and the consecration of the first-born with the Exodus (Exod. xii.—xiii. 16).

In like manner the larger collections of laws and ordinances are set in an historical framework, as, for example, the collection beginning at Exod. xxv.; and as in Lev. x., and frequently in the Book of Numbers, an incident in the history gives occasion to some additional detail of legislation. The appearance of the laws in this fashion, in separate collections or in detail, in various places, while the narrative moves on in steady progression, gives the impression that the primary object in view throughout is not so much the exhibition of an elaborate code of laws as the delineation of a connected course of history.

And then (3) if we consider the nature of the laws themselves, we are led to the same conclusion. Many of them are given with reference to special situations, or suited only to temporary conditions; a greater number are in themselves of a formal or

ritual character, but the purpose for which they are given is always distinctly held up to view. Prior to the giving of the law is the choosing of the people; and the law is given to educate them for their high destiny. Such expressions as "I am the Lord," "Thou art an holy people," are ever recurring as reasons for the promulgation of a statute or motives for its observance; and underlying the enactments of the law there is the establishing of a covenant. When God promises Abraham a numerous seed and the possession of Canaan, He makes a covenant with him (Gen. xv. 18, xvii. 2); when He reveals Himself to Moses in the bush, there is a new declaration of the same covenant (Exod. vi. 4); and the great transaction at Horeb is spoken of also as a covenant (Deut. v. 2; compare Jerem. xxxi. 31).

The whole legislation of the Pentateuch points back to the choosing of a people for a special purpose, and points forward to the unfolding of that purpose in their history.

3. *Plan.*—Thus the two streams of narrative and legislation come together, and the current tends onward, mainly in chronological order, to one great end. The Book of Genesis is complete in itself, yet the reader at its close is aware that a great plan is being unfolded, and asks what is to follow; and at the close of Deuteronomy there is not only a distinct retrospect to all that preceded, but there is a great plan still in progress.

And what is the plan? It is to trace the rise, selection, and consolidation of a covenant people who have, in God's purpose, a great work to perform in the world. And in the unfolding of this plan, the narrative is not content with starting from the time when the people existed as a nation, but traces them backward to a chosen family, of which Abraham was the head. This family is again traced back to its source, and that again to a higher source, till the origin of the human race and of the universe is reached. Or, to change the point of view, there is from the beginning onwards a kind of pyramidal structure, each succeeding stage of which is narrower than the preceding. Thus, when "All flesh had corrupted its way on the earth," a new beginning is made in the family of Noah; in this family a limitation is made to the descendants of Shem; from among them the family of Abraham is selected, and the patriarch himself is made the depositary of the promise. Again, there is an elimination of Ishmael and the Keturæans, and the promise centres in Isaac; one son of Isaac is set aside, and the blessing runs in the line of Jacob and his descendants, among whom Ephraim and Judah are specially designated to future pre-eminence.

Along with this limitation in the extent of the chosen people, there is an increasing intensity in the nature of the charge assigned to them. The covenant with Abraham is much more special than the covenant with Noah, and the covenant at Sinai is ratified with still more specific commands. In all this there is a manifest unity of plan and a steady progress to a future. Great blanks in time do not interrupt the thread of the narrative, and from the very first there are hints of a greater consummation which, even at the close of the books, is still distant. The purpose is plainly not to collect facts in order to satisfy curiosity, but to select facts to prove a design. It is history, and particularly the religious history of a divinely guided people that is contemplated.

4. *Unity.*—The unity of the Pentateuch, however, lies rather in this uniting idea than in its external form; it is more historical than literary. Though there is a steady progression, events are not narrated in strictly chronological order; different accounts of one and the same event are found side by side; repetitions are not considered a literary blemish; nor is all that relates to one subject set down in one place.

As in other Scriptures, the work of human hands is apparent in the arranging and selecting of existing materials, and there is little or no effort made to conceal the fact that materials are made use of. Whereas a modern historian, after consulting his authorities and verifying his facts, relates occurrences in his own words, with a reference to the sources from which he has drawn, we have here the very words of the authorities; family registers, lists of places, fragments of old poetry, stories of bygone days, and details of the lives of ancient heroes, minute regulations of social life or ritual service, are all strung upon the one thread of the history, but their individuality is not obliterated.

As the books traverse a wide space of time, the materials thus put together belong to different periods. Side by side with accounts of primeval times, handed down orally or in writing, we have notices of a later time, explaining the names of places or elucidating matters that are obscure. Points that in a modern book would fall into foot notes are placed in the text; and there is no attempt to conceal the work of human hands in the composition. The work may be said to be as unique in its literary form as it is uniform in its historical conception.

5. *The Literary Problem.*—A production of such a description presents a literary problem of great difficulty, and no question has been more keenly discussed than that of the origin and

composition of the Pentateuch. The Jews indeed, from the earliest times at which we find them stating their tradition as to the origin of the various books of the Old Testament, without hesitation ascribe the Pentateuch to Moses, using the expression "Law of Moses," or "Book of the Law of Moses," convertibly with the "Five-fifths of the Law."

This belief was accepted without question by the early Christian Church on the authority of the Jewish synagogue, and so the Pentateuch has come to be commonly described as the Five Books of Moses. A tradition so persistent is not to be summarily set aside, for it may be concluded that it rests on some solid basis of fact, but neither is it to be accepted as decisive, because this is a matter of minute details in which tradition cannot be expected to be precisely accurate. The occurrence of a great event, or of a series of great events, or the activity of a great personage, may make such an impression on the memory and the life of a people that tradition cannot go astray in reference to it; but the handing on of a book or books through a series of generations, when the art of printing was unknown, and through a history full of remarkable vicissitudes, is a different matter.

Jewish tradition itself ascribes to Ezra an undefined but not inconsiderable share in the work of reducing the Pentateuch and other Scriptures to their present shape, and from the time of Moses to that of Ezra we have no definite information as to the process through which the earlier writings passed. But it is to be observed that it was not on the strength of their being written by this or that person that the ancient Jews accepted their sacred books. These books had come down to them from ancient times, many of them being anonymous compositions, though no doubt some tradition of authorship attached to each of them; but it seems to have been only when they were being collected or after they were collected into a canon, that each had its authorship assigned to it. The historical books from Judges onwards give no intimation of the hands by whom they were written, and the traditions of the Jewish synagogue, of a later time, are very uncertain.

It is particularly to be noticed that in the books of the Pentateuch itself the Mosaic origin is not claimed. In the Book of Genesis there is no mention of authorship whatever; and in the three succeeding books the few passages that might be taken as direct assertions that Moses wrote what has come down to us in the Pentateuch, will be found on examination to refer only to certain specific things, though of course they do not exclude

the writing of other things.* And the same is to be said of the similar statements in the Book of Deuteronomy xxxi. 9—11, 22, 24—26. What all these passages directly say is that Moses was commanded to write and did put down in writing certain matters, both of history and of legislation, “for a memorial;” and thus, indirectly, the Pentateuch itself leads us to the conclusion that he had to do with the two great streams of which we saw it is composed. So also the Book of Joshua makes distinct mention not only of a law, but of a book of the law, the writing of which is ascribed to Moses.† It is remarkable that neither in the Book of Judges nor in those of Samuel is there any direct mention of such a written work; but notices of it again appear in the Book of Kings, and are continued in the succeeding historical Books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. These notices are either in general terms, such as those that have just been adduced, or consist of references to special laws and ordinances ascribed to Moses. They become more precise in the priestly Books of Chronicles; and in the time of Ezra, who was “a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given” (Ezra vii. 6), there is a detailed account (Nehemiah viii.) of the public reading, with ceremony, of a formal “Book of the Law of Moses,” “from the morning till midday,” in the audience of the people.

6. *Traditional View.*—We need not therefore wonder at the tenacity of the tradition which ascribes the Pentateuch to Moses. On the one hand, the work of the great leader had deeply impressed itself on the memory of the nation and moulded its history, as testified by succeeding events and by the constant appeal of the prophets. On the other hand, there were these distinct references to his work as a writer and legislator, warranting the impression that the legal system handed down from old time was derived from him. Nothing was more natural, when the sacred books were collected and accepted as a basis of faith and practice, than that the Pentateuch should be summarily accepted as of Mosaic authorship. If ever there was a time in the history of Israel when laws and ordinances were particularly needed to shape the nation’s life, it was at such a time and in such a situation as the history assigns to Moses. The time of youthful hope, in nations as in individuals, is the time when plans are made for the future; at such a time and in such circumstances also, a nation would become conscious of the fact that it had a destiny and a history before it.

* The passages should be examined in their connection:—Exodus xvii. 14; xxiv. 4, 7; xxv. iv. 27. Numbers xxxiii. 1—2.

† Josh. i. 7, 8; viii. 31, 34; xxiii. 6; xxiv. 26.

It is one thing to make history and another thing to write it (though in the discussions that have taken place as to the origin and transmission of these books, the distinction has not been sufficiently borne in mind); but we have seen enough to prove that Moses, standing at the commencement of the national life, thought of both things. Knowing that his people were born to a high destiny, he put down "for a memorial" the record of great events in which they were concerned, and committed to writing laws and ordinances for their future guidance. But as to the actual amount of his writing we are not informed. Things that were "rehearsed in the ears" of Joshua, things that were spoken to "Aaron and his sons," or to "the priests," may have been preserved orally by them, or committed afterwards to writing. The potent influence of Moses on the history and destinies of his nation is undoubted; but the precise amount of the matter contained in the Pentateuch that came directly from his hand is a legitimate subject of critical inquiry. Now the tradition of the Jews, accepted by the early Christian Church, was evidently based on the general belief as to the historical position of Moses, not on a minute examination of the writings ascribed to him. It belongs to a time when the work of literary criticism was unknown, and it did not take account of some considerations which must be borne in mind in seeking to arrive at an exact conclusion on such a subject.

7. *Modification of Traditional View.*—In the first place, we must bear in mind the long time that elapsed between Moses and Ezra, to whom the Jews attribute the restoration of the law. It was a time, not only long in extent, but filled up with the extraordinary vicissitudes of a most remarkable history, periods of declension and seasons of revival, war from without and schism from within, the deadening effects of prosperity and the sobering influences of captivity; and we are told nothing of the custody and fate of the sacred writings during this period, and only in very general terms are they mentioned at all. The history turns more upon the maintenance of the nation's religion than upon the preservation of its literature. The prophets had at times to contend earnestly for the very recognition of the true God and the practice of the most fundamental duties of religion; and though they ever appealed to the covenant relation of Israel, we do not wonder that they troubled themselves little with the enforcing of the mere external observances of the law, or even threw contempt upon these when they were divorced from heart-religion.

For long periods the people of Israel seem to have been as ignorant of their own religion as the people of Europe were of

theirs in the Dark Ages. The discovery of the law book in the reign of Josiah (2 Kings xxii.) is like the discovery by Luther of the New Testament in the monastery; and when at last Ezra reads the law to the returned exiles, it is as new to them as the Bible was to the people at the Reformation. But whose hands preserved the original writings during all this time? By what pens were they copied from generation to generation, and in what form were they handed down till they came into the possession of Ezra the Scribe?

These questions suggest a *second* point which we have to bear in mind in considering this matter, *viz.*, the mode in which books were transmitted in ancient times. We know with what care the Jews have preserved and handed down their sacred books from the time that they were collected into a canon; but that time falls comparatively late, and, whatever may have been the cause, we have not, as in the case of the New Testament, manuscripts of the Old Testament reaching back to a period reasonably near the time at which the books were composed. The oldest known manuscripts of the Old Testament belong to the tenth century after Christ, and though versions of an older date show that the text was fixed centuries before, yet we have no means of knowing what aids were employed to secure the correctness of the text, or, indeed, on what principle the text was fixed. And when we look at the books themselves, and consider the mode in which other Eastern works have been handed down, there are some noteworthy features that strike us.

The anonymous character of all the historical writings of the Old Testament would lead us to conclude that the ancient Hebrews had not the idea of literary property which we attach to authorship. Joshua, as we have seen, wrote certain things in the Book of the Law; and whole passages are found repeated, with variations, in different parts of Scripture.* Even in two contemporaneous writers the same piece occurs, without any information as to whether the one borrowed from the other or both from a common source.† Whatever documents or sources were employed in the Pentateuch, they are simply appropriated, and only on rare occasions‡ is the quarter named from which they are taken. Besides this absence of marks of quotation, we have to note the absence of marginal or foot-notes, such as are common in modern works of history. Yet, unless

* Compare 2 Sam. xxii. with Psalm xviii., and 2 Kings xviii. 13—xx. 19, with Isaiah xxxvi.—xxxix.

† Compare Isaiah ii. 1—4, with Micah iv. 1—3.

‡ As in Numbers xxi. 14.

the Hebrews were very different from other Orientals in this respect, they must have written on the margins of their manuscripts. In Eastern works that have been handed down in manuscript, it is the commonest thing to find marginal notes by a later hand by way of explanation or commentary, and not an uncommon thing to find, on the margin of one work, a complete treatise of another author on the same or a kindred subject.

Now a scribe copying a work with marginal notes, especially if it were a work in regard to which the question of literary property did not occur to him, might naturally transfer such notes into the text; or an editor, wishing to have a complete edition, might combine two or more longer pieces into one whole, adding to the fulness of the work, yet allowing the joinings of the original parts to be seen. Of course, when once the books were collected into a canon and the text fixed, this was no longer admissible; and the Jews have most carefully handed down the books of their canon, without venturing to change a word or a letter. But what happened to these anonymous works while they were in process of completion is not a matter of direct historical knowledge. It is a legitimate task for criticism to examine the books themselves, as other ancient books are examined, with a view to determine, if possible, by what process their materials were brought together and handed down.

8. *Composite Character of the Pentateuch.*—It is long since the composite character of the Pentateuch was observed. Even the earlier Jewish writers, who claimed Mosaic authorship for the whole, except the concluding verses of Deuteronomy, which record the death of Moses; and some of the more acute thinkers of a later time were struck by the occurrence of expressions, phrases, and passages which could hardly have come from his hand, but seemed rather to be later additions.* Several writers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries drew attention to other features in the books pointing in the same direction, and advanced theories to account for them; but it was not till the middle of the eighteenth century that a line of investigation was started which determined the future course of systematic criticism.

* It is impossible, in an introduction like the present, to go into details, or even to refer to many of the phases which critical discussion on this subject has assumed. The reader who is conversant with the subject will observe that the aim is to lead on, as briefly as possible, to the present position of the discussion.

Astruc, a learned French physician, accepting Moses as the author of the Book of Genesis, set himself to discover and exhibit the documents that Moses had made use of in the writing of it. He pointed out that certain parts were distinguished by the employment of the name Elohim, rendered *God* in our English version, while other parts employed the name, usually written Jehovah in English, and rendered in our version *The Lord*. He supposed that these different names indicated different original documents, and that out of these two larger documents, and a certain number of smaller ones, Moses constructed the existing Book of Genesis, and the opening chapters of Exodus. On the line of enquiry thus started it has been the endeavour of modern criticism to determine the component elements of the Pentateuch and their relative dates.

9. *Literary Criticism*.—It was observed by the critics that this peculiarity in the use of the Divine names was not confined to Genesis, but extended to the other books. It was also noted that the portions using these different names had other characteristics distinguishing them from one another; moreover, that the Book of Deuteronomy had a style and tone different in important respects from both, and that all these literary features are found also in the Book of Joshua. The problem, therefore, was to account for this diversified character of composition, to determine the relations of the various component parts to one another, and to fix their respective dates.

In the course of an inquiry, prosecuted with the utmost labour and ingenuity, various theories were put forward, agreeing in certain main points, but exhibiting differences of detail as numerous as the writers who engaged in the discussion. The theory of fragments, advanced by some, according to which the Pentateuch was composed of isolated pieces, put together without any internal connection, was admitted to be inadequate to explain the manifest coherence of the whole. The hypothesis of two independent original works, the one Elohistic and the other Jehovahistic, combined by a later hand, did not account for the fact that certain Elohistic parts adhered so firmly to the Jehovahistic work that they could not be separated. And the theory that an original Elohistic work had been supplemented by a Jehovahistic writer, left unexplained the fact that the supposed supplement appeared to be, so far, a document complete in itself.

The main points on which critics came to be agreed, about a quarter of a century ago, were:—that there was, first in order, an Elohistic document (in which were incorporated some elements of an ancient date), running through the Pentateuch and beyond

it; that there was also a document described as Jehovistic, although Elohistic matter adhered to it; and that there came, finally, the Deuteronomic portion, the work of a succeeding writer, who had combined the others, and, with the addition of his own material, constructed what we have now substantially in the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua. As to the manner in which the various elements were brought together, and the times at which the composition and editing took place, scarcely any two writers of note agreed. Criticism almost lost itself in the multiplicity of its details; and Kuenen, one of the most prominent of the critical school, had at last to confess that "the books of Moses" themselves "did not furnish a sufficient number of fixed points, and left room for great difference of opinion" on this subject.

10. *Historical Criticism.*—Meanwhile another line of inquiry had been taken up. It was presumed that an examination of the historical books from Judges onwards would show to what extent the laws and ceremonies of the Pentateuch had been actually observed, and would consequently afford means for determining in what order the different parts of the legislation had come into force. The Deuteronomic legislation was taken as the starting-point; and it was concluded that, since the law prescribing a central sanctuary* was not enforced before the time of Josiah, the law itself could not have existed till that king's reign, and the substance of the book must have been written shortly before the reformation which he set on foot.† On the same line of reasoning, Graf set himself to examine the history with reference to the legislation contained in the Elohistic portion, which had hitherto been reputed the earliest part of the Pentateuch. The conclusion at which he arrived was, that the laws of that portion were not observed till after the Captivity, and that therefore they must have been introduced by Ezra and his successors. And then, when it was pointed out that these laws are closely incorporated with historical details which relate the early institution of the laws, Graf boldly declared that these historical portions were likewise of late date, and must have been written to give a colour of antiquity to the laws.

This theory, as compared with other theories which had preceded it, has not inappropriately been called a theory of crystallization. For it explains the composition of the Pentateuch and historical books by the supposition of a process of literary deposits belonging to different periods. That is to say, it pro-

* It is found in Deut. xii. 4 ff, and elsewhere.

† 2 Kings xxii., xxiii.

fesses to have discovered three different codes of legislation, separated by wide intervals of time, viz., the Book of the Covenant, contained in Exodus xx. 23—xxiii. ; the Deuteronomic Code, introduced in the reign of Josiah ; and the Levitical Code, embracing a great part of Exodus and the whole of Leviticus, and introduced after the Exile. And it arranges the historical materials of the books in a series of deposits, according as they show that one code or another was in existence at the time of their composition. The theory, it will be seen, is revolutionary in its critical aspects ; for it places last in order of composition the document which had hitherto been considered to have all the marks of being the earliest. It is also revolutionary in the view it gives of the course of Israel's history ; for it represents the nation as having existed with the smallest amount of written law, and with the very crudest and most elementary notions of religion up to the time of the prophets, who were the teachers of a purer faith, and through whose influence the two greater legislative codes were at subsequent times introduced. The order of succession, on this theory, is no longer "Moses and the Prophets," but the Prophets and Mosaism ; and a large part of the narratives of the Pentateuch is legendary or fictitious, composed at a late time to support an unhistorical view that had come to prevail as to Israel's early history.

It is evident that the question of the handing down of books dwindles into insignificance in view of the issue that is now raised. The point now is, not as to the amount that Moses wrote, but as to the truth of the story which the Pentateuch tells of the time and activity of Moses ; and we have, as opposed to the account which the Biblical writers give of the course of the history, an entirely different account, which is evolved by critical processes from the writings. As to the steps in the critical process by which the theory is reached, detailed discussion would here be out of place ; and it will be more convenient to refer to them in treating of the several books. It may be merely said here that many points which are claimed to be proved are at least very questionable ; and that the fluctuations of critical inquiry in the past, and the attitude of reserve maintained by some writers of undoubted critical ability at the present time, make it very probable that what claims to-day to be "the received view of European scholarship" may at no distant date be seen to be open to revision. We can only make a few observations on the theory as a whole.

11. *Objections to the Critical View.*—This theory of Israel's history, when presented in its fully developed form, is open to very serious objections from three different points of view.

In the first place, it is manifest that the principle of denying the existence of a law on the ground that, at a stated time, or for a certain period, there is no historical proof of its observance, is one that cannot safely be applied. The history of the Christian Church during the nineteen centuries in which the New Testament has been accepted as the authoritative rule of faith and life is a standing refutation of it; for have there not been doctrines and practices lying in abeyance, sometimes for centuries, in spite of the written word? On this principle it might be concluded that the second commandment was not known in Solomon's time, because there were "graven images" of bulls under the great brazen laver in the Temple court; and from the way in which Jeremiah speaks of the practices of cutting and making bald for the dead (Jer. xvi. 6), it might be inferred that the laws forbidding these things (Deut. xiv. 1, Lev. xix. 28) were unknown to him. The Law of the Covenant itself was systematically violated in its essential part, the prohibition of tampering with idolatry, down to the close of the nation's independence. It will be the proper place in the chapters on the succeeding books to speak of their alleged silence as to the Mosaic legislation, and the accounts they give of the antecedent history. It is sufficient here to observe that the historical books continually assume Israel's unfaithfulness to the law and the covenant, that the prophets had a higher function than to enforce the observance of ceremonial laws, and that all succeeding writers assume the truthfulness of the history of the Mosaic period.

In the second place, when the theory is applied in detail it is found to raise more difficulties, and difficulties of a more serious nature, than those which it professes to remove. (a) It puts a weight upon the age of Ezra and his successors which it will not bear. It is plain from the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and from what we know of the succeeding time, that that age was not one of such productiveness as this theory demands. These men rested upon a past, and but for a general belief in the authority of an existing law they could not have induced the people to accept the reforms which they introduced. Moreover, (b), the Samaritans could not have received their Pentateuch later than the time of Ezra and Nehemiah; it is virtually the same book as the Hebrew one, and in view of their jealousy of the leaders at Jerusalem, their possession of it implies their belief in its existence and authoritative character at a much earlier time. Again, (c), this theory fails entirely to explain the activity of the prophets before the Exile. For it represents them as the virtual originators and founders of the monotheistic religion, and the

nation of their time as not only practising the religious rites of the heathen around them, but as actually knowing no better; whereas the whole tone of the prophetic teaching is one of reproof for unfaithfulness to the true God, and for breaches of a covenant which was the very basis of the nation's existence.* Finally, (*d*), the theory fails to account for the high esteem in which Moses is held from first to last in Scripture, and for the firm belief in the events which are associated with his name; in other words, it reduces the influence of Moses to such a degree that there is not sufficient material left on which to base the prevalent belief that he was the great lawgiver and leader of the nation.

In the third place, underneath this theory, as it has been held by its most prominent advocates, lies the assumption that religion is merely a matter of ethical development, an assumption which vitiates the whole process. Thus Wellhausen adopts as the motto of his inquiry the words used by St. Paul in reference to the heathen nations, "these having not the law, do by nature the works of the law," and summarily sets aside all that is miraculous in the narratives as unhistorical; and Kuennen opens his "Religion of Israel" with the declaration, "For us the Israelitish religion is one of the principal religions, nothing less, but also nothing more," and proceeds to treat the documents on the hypothesis that the religion of Israel grew up by natural development. This is a begging of the whole question. The whole point is to find out whether it is or is not "something more." These writers themselves accept the fact that the history of Israel is unique, and that it was their religion that made it so. The whole question is, Was there not something unique in the manner in which this religion was made known? But the pre-supposition with which these critics start requires them to identify the religion of any period with the belief and practice of the people for the time being; and their theory of historical development enables each individual to extract just as much or as little of historical fact from the documents before him as suits his own views. Wellhausen, for example, admits that the

* As an instance of the way in which a theory can be pushed at all hazards, it may be noted that Stade, in his "Geschichte des Volkes Israel" (1881—1888), admits that Hosea, one of the earliest of the writing prophets, represents the corrupt religion of his time as a declension; but instead of accepting the prophet's declaration as a statement of fact, he says in effect that Hosea was wrong on this matter, and that his misrepresentation prepared the way for the "unhistorical view" that came to be taken of the nation's history under the influence of later ideas!

Exodus from Egypt was an historical event, although it was effected in a natural manner ; but Stade says boldly that it is in vain to look for traces of Israel's sojourn in Egypt because the people were never there. And when two writers, claiming to be guided by the same principles of criticism, draw conclusions so different from the same documents, it is plain that it is something apart from the documents that determines the result.

12. *Credibility.*—On the whole it may be said that the course of critical inquiry tends to confirm our confidence in the credibility and value of these early books. By investigating the process by which the books were brought together, it has, so to speak, summoned so many different witnesses in corroboration of the history. The different portions, so diverse in their tone, and belonging to different periods, fit together in a remarkable manner into a consistent history, showing development in the best sense of the word. Arranged in any order into which the ingenuity of criticism may cast them, they tell substantially the same tale. The only alternative, that large portions were invented at a later time to support a fiction, is an instance of criticism driven to desperation. That a writing is late is no reason to regard it as inaccurate. The very lateness of a writer may be the occasion of giving him a deeper insight ; and the course of the succeeding history has proved that the insight of the Old Testament writers was correct.

The existence of the Jewish race at the present day is a fact which can only be explained by their history and their religion. The Christian religion itself is the witness to the unique character of the history of Israel. We do not require to press the New Testament references to the Law into proofs that the Pentateuch as it is came from the hand of Moses. But the whole history of Christianity proves that a religion may, at its rise, be far above the conceptions of the time, and that it may, for centuries, be far above the practice of those who profess it ; and the New Testament rests so firmly on the Old, that there is the strongest presumption that what is true of the one, in this respect, is true of the other. We need not undervalue the truth that is found in the other “principal religions” of the world. The Bible itself acknowledges the existence of such truth in various ways. But the fact remains, that the One God designed from the first to give to mankind one religion which is above all others ; and these early books show us the first stages of preparation for its manifestations.

There may remain doubts as to when the various parts of the Pentateuch were actually written down ; it may be admitted that

later writers wrote in the light of the events and circumstances of their own times. But the substantial coherence and consistency of the whole indicate a guiding Hand and a Divine purpose revealing itself from stage to stage; and the manner in which the story is told indicates that there was a perception of such a plan and a consciousness of the purpose on the part of the men by whom the story was committed to writing. So that, in reading these records of early time, while we note "the sundry times and divers manners" in which it was made known, we become more and more convinced that a great plan of mercy underlies the whole, which is unfolded through Moses and all the prophets, and is at last fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

GENESIS.

1. *Name of the Book.*—The names given in the Hebrew Bible to the five books composing the Pentateuch consist merely of a word or words taken from the opening verse of each ; and so this first book of the series is simply designated by the expression translated “In the beginning” Jewish writers sometimes employ other names descriptive of the contents, calling the book before us the “Book of Creation ;” and, on the same principle, the Hellenists and Church Fathers applied to it the name we now use, *Genesis, i.e. Origin or Genealogy.* The name is not inappropriate, in view of the commencement of the book and the recurring genealogies which are found in it ; but it would be inadequate, if taken to imply that the chief aim of the book is to give an account of the origin of the world. In the opening chapters we have indeed an account of the Creation and of the early history of the human race ; but this is but preparatory to the main part of the book, beginning at the eleventh chapter, viz. the history of the chosen family of Abraham, which at the close of the book is seen expanding into the chosen nation of Israel.

2. *Plan and Form.*—A definite plan is more observable in the Book of Genesis than in the other books of the Pentateuch. Starting with the origin of the world and of the human race, it tells of the entrance of sin (i.—iv.), the spread of mankind and the increase of evil leading to the infliction of Divine judgment in the Flood (v.—viii. 4.). A new commencement is made with righteous Noah and his family, and there is a new expansion and increase of evil, culminating in the judgment of Babel (viii. 15—xi. 9). The chosen succession is again limited to the line of Shem and the family of Terah (xi. 10—32), and at this point the patriarchal history commences, the remainder of the book being occupied with the fortunes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and his family, who at the close are transplanted to the soil of Egypt, from which they are to come forth as a nation.

In all this we perceive at once the narrowing of the lines of God's choice and the intensifying of the purpose for which the choice is made.* We perceive, also, what may be called the philosophy of history which runs through the Old Testament: a holy seed grows, becomes corrupted, and suffers punishment, but a remnant, purified by chastisement, is saved, again expands and runs through the same cycle.

Very observable, in the matter of literary form, is the arrangement of the history in a series of genealogies. The expression, "These are the generations," occurs ten (or, strictly speaking, eleven) times, showing a steady progression of the narrative. Thus we have "the generations of"—

The heavens and the earth (ii. 4).	Terah (xi. 27).
Adam (v. 1).	Ishmael (xxv. 12).
Noah (vi. 9).	Isaac (xxv. 19).
Sons of Noah (x. 1).	Esau (xxxvi. 1, 9).
Shem (xi. 10).	Jacob (xxxvii. 2).

/ Among other literary characteristics of the composition that have been pointed out may be mentioned the two accounts of the Creation (i. 1—ii. 3 and ii. 4—25), and two of the Flood (vi. 5—ix. 17), distinguished by the names of "God" and "the LORD" respectively, in the latter case the two accounts being fused into one. The notes in regard to the "Canaanite" (xii. 6) and "the kings that reigned in Edom" (xxxvi. 31) were also long ago pointed out as indications of the work of a late hand in the composition; and the position of the account of the family of Keturah (xxv.) may be taken as an instance of the writer's indifference to strict chronological order.†

3. *Scope*.—The Book of Genesis, regarded by itself, might be described as the account given by the Hebrews of their own origin and of the origin of the world. To the questions, Whence are we? and Whence came this world? all literary nations have, in their infancy, applied themselves, and given very various answers. They are the questions which children put to their parents in all ages, and this book contains the answers which we may suppose the fathers in Israel gave to their children when they asked the meaning of various religious observances, or clustered round their knees and gazed inquiringly up to heaven, while the moon walked in brightness and stars looked down from the cloudless sky. They would be told how their forefather Abraham left his home in distant Ur of the Chaldees, and journeyed westward in obedience to a heavenly call: that the

* See Introduction to the Pentateuch, § 3, p. 3.

† *Ibid.*, §§ 4, 8, pp. 4, 9.

God who called him was the Creator of all things, who had made all things good, and man for a holy purpose : how men, in their forgetfulness of God, had fallen into the worship of sun, moon, stars, and other created things, but that God had never ceased to guide them and make Himself known to them : and how Abraham had been finally severed from the idolatrous race, and made the father of a family which was to be the depositary of God's truth, the means of keeping alive His memorial in the world.

Such was the faith, such were the traditions, going back to earliest times, which must have prevailed, if not among the mass of the people, at all events among the thinking and pious of the nation, before the materials which compose the Book of Genesis took shape. Such a faith was needed to give the nation solidity and unity; without such a faith it could not have assumed the form it took nor held the position it maintained, in the midst of nations and peoples vastly more powerful in numbers and superior in the arts and appliances of life.

4. *Religious Tone.*—And we cannot fail to be struck, first of all, with the high religious tone of these early traditions of the Hebrews, as compared with the accounts which other nations of antiquity have given of themselves and of the world. The first verse strikes the keynote of the whole. By the few simple words, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” the “gods many” of the heathen mythologies are swept away, the extravagant ancient cosmogonies are brushed aside; the deification of material things, the degradation of the Godhead, and the fabulous divine origin of mankind—everything, in short, that distinguishes the pagan systems—is contradicted, and the world and the human race are set in a new and brighter light. Even when there is an approach to the mythological language of paganism (as in vi. 2), there is no approach to its gross materialistic conceptions. The very name of God, *Elohim*, is plural in form, but it is regularly employed as a singular, and suggests no polytheistic meaning; and though the LORD, *Jehovah*, is represented as smelling with satisfaction the savour of Noah's sacrifice (viii. 21), and coming down to earth to interfere in man's affairs (xi. 7), yet there is not the faintest trace of the ascription to Him of the caprices and passions which the heathen attributed to their gods.

And this is the characteristic of the Hebrew writers throughout the Old Testament, that, though their language is steeped in poetic feeling and abounds in the boldest personifications, they are never betrayed by it into the deification of created things, or the endowment of them with conscious life. Sun, moon, and

stars, which others worshipped and regarded as sentient existences, are merely the work of God's fingers. Hebrew poets may represent the morning stars as singing together, floods lifting up their voices, and fields clapping their hands, but they are stars, floods and fields still, and all their manifestations are to the praise of God. In the wide universe everything is from God and subject to Him ; of all earthly creatures, man alone is made in the Divine image, and man's world is still under the direct government of God.

We may find, in the later history of Israel, this faith overlaid with many corruptions, and held in conjunction with very inconsistent practices (and what nation has not exhibited similar perversions of its own religion ?), but it is there as a light shining in a dark place, and giving to the world a witness to the true God. The whole subsequent history of Israel is based on the supposition that God made Himself known to Abraham, and that the patriarch handed on to his descendants a purer tradition of primitive times than the traditions of other historic peoples. This tradition the Book of Genesis has preserved for us ; and in whatever mode we may suppose that the materials of the book were brought together, or in whatever way we may conclude that they were preserved before they assumed their present form, it is round this faith, as round a magnet, that they have been attracted and have grouped themselves : that God, the Maker of all, has had a purpose from the beginning, and that, amid all the strivings of mankind, and the idolatries of the nations, the Divine rule has never been relaxed, and a Divine providence has been recognised by those who possessed the secret of the Lord.

5. *Relation to Science.*—Now, if it is the main purpose of the book to emphasise this truth, it is of the utmost importance that we should bear it constantly in view if we would estimate rightly the character of the whole and the significance of the various parts. Yet much perplexity and needless alarm have been caused by the neglect of so obvious a rule. So strong is the fascination of all questions as to the origins of things, that many persons, accepting the Bible as the highest authority, took for granted that, when it touched on such questions, it would give definite and precise information ; and when science, in the course of its advances, seemed to give a different account of some matters, there was no little alarm at the supposed “conflict of science and religion.”

All this comes of losing sight of the standpoint of the book, the purpose of which is not to tell us about nature, so much as about the God of nature and providence. What the sacred

writers know and have learned on other subjects they will tell, so far as these bear on the matter in hand, and in a manner which the readers for which they wrote could comprehend. As the historian of Christianity goes back to Judaism, to show the connection of the old faith with the new, so the historian of Israel goes back to the time before the nation had a separate existence, in order to explain its origin and standing. But in the one case, as in the other, the writer passes by much that might be interesting, because it has no special bearing on his subject. As the stream of religious history is traced upwards to its source, there are many things seen on its banks, to linger over which would divert us from the main purpose, which is not to satisfy curiosity on all subjects, but to show the bearing of all on the one point in view. The facts of modern science were then hidden from men, and without scientific process and scientific language, could neither have been described nor understood; and to expect early Hebrew writers to teach us exact geological, or astronomical, or ethnographical science, is as unreasonable as to expect them to write in a modern language.

The book of nature is open to all, and what man can learn from it God leaves him to learn; but God Himself is known only to those to whom He makes Himself known. The secrets of nature He has left mankind to learn by slow degrees throughout the ages for themselves; but in mercy He made Himself known to men in the earliest times, and has revealed himself with increasing clearness as they could bear it. That the sacred writers themselves did not contemplate scientific accuracy on subjects that have a scientific reference we may see from the varying modes in which the work of creation is represented in different places. By a hard and literal interpretation it might be concluded from chap. ii. 19 that the creation of man is made to precede that of the beast of the field and the fowl of the air; yet the writer or compiler of the book must have seen no inconsistency in the accounts of the first and second chapters. And there are other passages which, if pressed literally, would exhibit remarkable variations from the account of the first chapter: * but, with unvarying voice they all proclaim the one great fact, that God is the Creator and Preserver of all things.

In like manner we perceive that the traditions of early times, in proportion as the events recede into the distance, are clothed in more general and pictorial or poetical forms, while details

* See Job xxvi. 7—11; xxxviii. 4—7: Psalm xxiv. 2; Prov. viii. 24—29. In Psalm civ. the order of Genesis i. is followed, but no reference is made to the six days.

of patriarchal life are sketched in clearer light and with firmer hand; but whether the view is near or remote, one fact shines with undimmed lustre, that God rules all things for good.

6. *Confirmed by Modern Research.*—Yet the results of modern science do not conflict with the statements of the Book of Genesis, when these are read in the sense in which they are meant to be taken. On the contrary, the increase of knowledge that has been gained in the fields of physical science, of archeology, and of topography, has added much to our understanding of these early records, and shown in many ways how accurate are the statements of the sacred writers, even on matters which were only incidental to the great subject they had before them.

(i.) In regard to physical science, it is not necessary, from our point of view, to enter into details as to where geology and the Biblical account of Creation agree, or to discuss at length the sense in which some expressions are employed in the first chapter of Genesis. We must make allowance here, as in the case of any writing, for the writer's standpoint and the understanding of those for whom he wrote. But the marvellous thing is, that if the Biblical writers were not led to set down scientific truth in scientific phrases, they were guided so as not to set down things inconsistent with scientific results. It may be safely said that the Biblical account of Creation agrees more closely with the conclusions of modern science than with any of the cosmogonies that were adopted before the sciences of geology and astronomy existed, and that of all attempts to explain the origins of things, this comes by far the nearest to the truth as science has discovered it. And this is not so much because it contains more precise details, but because it is drawn on broader lines, which science, as it advances, is enabled to fill in with ascertained facts. Science in its patient advance into the remote past, is showing more and more clearly the manner in which the world came into existence; but the goal towards which its researches are tending is the point at which Revelation stands shedding its light down the ages.

(ii.) Again, from discoveries made in recent years among the ruins of Babylon and Assyria, much light has been thrown on the early traditions of the Hebrews. We are now able to tell what were the early beliefs of the people in the distant land from which Abraham came into Canaan, and to compare them with the accounts of the Biblical writers. Thus we find, among these remains, detailed accounts of the Creation and of the Flood, as well as other traditions of matters touched upon in the early chapters of Genesis; but while the resemblances are so strong

that we cannot but see that they have a common source, the contrast between the gross polytheism on the one hand, and the pure monotheism on the other, strikes the reader at a glance. In both respects the accuracy of the Bible story is attested ; for it is to the effect that the traditions of primitive times were perpetuated among the peoples living in those lands, but that Abraham was severed from the idolatrous belief of his fathers.* So also the table of the families of the earth in chapter x. has been shown by the inscriptions to correspond with the nations that lay round about the field of history which the sacred writer set himself to describe. And Haran, whose great distance from Ur of the Chaldees was long an occasion of perplexity, is now known to have been the frontier town of the same Babylonian empire, on the high road leading to the west.

(iii.) Finally, Palestine has in recent years been more carefully explored, and the habits of the people more attentively studied, with the result that the accuracy of the Biblical accounts has been marvellously confirmed. A mere romancer is never more liable to fall into error than when he enters into topographical details, or describes the modes of life of a long-past time, and, in both respects, we can test these stories of the lives of the patriarchs to the letter. We can measure their journeys ; we can stand where they are represented as standing, and "lift up our eyes, and see" what they are said to have seen. And there is the other point. As the God of the Hebrew writers is high above all the passions and frailties of the heathen gods, so their men are divested of the fabulous qualities of heathen heroes : they are as human as their God is divine. The narrator who could describe the life and wanderings of the patriarchs as they are here depicted must have had the actual figures before his eye. But the mode of life which is here described was impossible at the time the land was filled with a settled population. If, after the manner of some critics, we search for a time when this mode of life prevailed, we must either go back to a period before Israel had grown into a settled nation, or come down to a time when life in Palestine had undergone a complete change. The life is the life of the Arab of the desert, and can be tested by it in minutest detail, but the scene is Palestine, and the topography is exact to the minutest detail. The narratives, therefore, came from some one who was conversant with life in Palestine when

* Attempts that have been made to show that the Biblical account of Creation was obtained from Babylon in the time of the Captivity, and re-cast in a monotheistic form in the post-Exilian writings, have not been successful. The resemblance is even more striking in the portions which the critics have not assigned to so late a date.

its inhabitants were partly settled and partly nomad, as it was in the days of the patriarchs, and as it is at the present day.

7. *Value*.—Thus, from different quarters we find facts which heighten our admiration for the accuracy of the account handed down to us in this ancient book. It may be a matter of criticism to discover the joinings of the narratives, and to trace the literary process by which the book took its present shape; but it is of far deeper interest to note the existence of a pure light in the midst of the world's darkness. It is our familiarity with it that makes us overlook the significance of the early testimony of the Hebrew people to the truth of the one God. But when we reflect that, at a time when the great nations of antiquity were stumbling in the dark on this subject, or groping their way towards it, the Hebrew race had it as their oldest tradition, we cannot but acknowledge that they received it from God Himself. And of far higher importance is it to our faith than the anticipation of the results of modern science would have been, to be assured that from hoary antiquity, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has been guiding our race and preparing it for the fulness of the times.

EXODUS.

1. *Name.*—The second book of the Pentateuch is, in the Hebrew Bible, simply entitled “Now these are the names of” . . . or briefly, “The names of” . . . *Exodus*, by which it is known among us, is the Greek name which was given by the Church Fathers, to indicate the principal subject of the book, the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. The later Jews, however, when they wished to designate it by its contents, with their legalistic predilection called it the book of “Damages,” from the legislative element which here comes prominently into view. For, whereas the Book of Genesis is almost entirely of a narrative character, this book, like that of Numbers, is of mixed contents, the former being narrative, the latter legislative. Yet these two elements are not sharply separated the one from the other. In the middle of the account of the preparations for the Exodus we find detailed regulations for the observance of the Passover and the Law of the Firstborn (xii. 1—xiii. 16); and closely interwoven with the legislation at Sinai we have not only the particulars of the occasion under which the laws were given (xxiv.) and the account of the manner in which some of the regulations were put into execution (xxxv. 20—xxxix), but also the narrative of the Sin of the Golden Calf and the judgment to which it led (xxxii.—xxxiii).

2. *Divisions and Contents.*—The book may, however, be roughly divided into two parts, chapters i.—xviii. giving an account of the departure of Israel from Egypt, and chapters xix.—xl. relating to the ratification of the covenant and the delivery of the law at Sinai in the first and second years of the Exodus.

In the former portion we have a description of the oppression in Egypt, the story of the birth and earlier life of Moses, and his appointment to be leader of the people (i.—iv.). Then follows the account of the struggle, which is both political, between Pharaoh and Israel, and religious, between the signs of Jehovah and those of the Egyptian magicians (v.—x.). The

struggle terminates in the tenth plague and the hurried departure of Israel (xii. 29—36), closely connected with which are the institution of the Passover and the Law of the Sanctification of the Firstborn. The journey to Sinai is then narrated, with details of the provision made by God for the guidance and sustenance of the people in the wilderness (xv. 22—xvii. 7), their victory over Amalek (xvii. 8—16), and the advice given by Jethro to Moses for the ordinary administration of justice (xviii. 1—27).

The second portion of the book, starting with the accomplished fact of the deliverance from Egypt, lays down the condition of the covenant between God and Israel, the observance of which would preserve them as “a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation” (xix. 1—6). The condition being accepted by the people, there follow the declaration of the law and the solemn ratification of it, over the “book of the covenant” (xiv. 7—xxiv. 8). From chapter xxiv. 9 to xxxi. 18 we have an account of the stay of Moses for forty days in the Mount, during which he receives the tables of stone and detailed instructions for the making of the Tabernacle. Meantime the people sin in the making of the golden calf, and Moses intercedes for them; God makes a revelation of Himself as the Merciful and Righteous, the tables are renewed and the covenant is again confirmed (xxxii.—xxxiv.). And finally, there is a detailed description of the work of preparing and fitting the Tabernacle, which is set up on the first day of the first month of the second year of the Exodus (xxxv.—xl.).

3. *Connection with Genesis.*—The Book of Exodus exhibits an advance upon that of Genesis. We have here no longer biographies and family histories, but the beginnings of the history of the chosen nation; and in place of revelations from time to time to individuals, we have provision for a continuous communication of the Divine will to the whole people by means of divinely appointed leaders.

The people that was, in the providence of God, to be placed in the midst of all the great nations of antiquity, and out of which in the fulness of time was to radiate the light that was to lighten the whole world, is here brought into contact with one of the great ancient civilisations; and we cannot fail to perceive the fitness of the circumstances under which they were consolidated into an organised nation. Their sojourn in Egypt no doubt made them familiar with idolatry to their hurt, as the sin of the golden calf early testifies; yet they were preserved by the prevailing custom of caste in Egypt, and by their separation in the land of Goshen, from becoming mixed with the nation by whom they were enslaved. At the same time, while the rich climate and the hard

labour favoured the increase of the race, their subject condition kept them from feeling at home. Moreover, the cultivation of letters in the land of their sojourn and the existence of an organised civil life around them, must have had an educative influence, not only on Moses and the leaders, but even on the people as a whole. Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah and Aholiab of the tribe of Dan, and other "wise-hearted" men, are found fitted to undertake the difficult technical work of constructing the Tabernacle in the wilderness, though, at a later time, Solomon had to call to his assistance the skilled workmen of Tyre for the construction of the Temple. Even the conditions of the hard labour in which they were employed had the counterbalancing advantage in this respect, that it brought into prominence the native chiefs and heads of families among the Israelites, who were made responsible to the Egyptian taskmasters for the work to be accomplished.

It is also to be noted that the contest represented by the plagues of Egypt, which must have extended over several months, would in various ways prepare the people for the Exodus. As the hope of deliverance grew stronger, the feeling of national unity and independence would increase; and the relenting of Pharaoh from time to time furnished an opportunity, on every occasion on which he promised to let the people go, for a rehearsal, so to speak, of the Exodus. And thus, instead of its being a tumultuous flight, as we are sometimes inclined to regard it, the departure from Egypt took the form of an orderly march.

This book, however, rests upon the Book of Genesis, and would be incomprehensible apart from it. Though a great space of time intervenes between the two, the narrative of Exodus is a continuation of that of Genesis; and though we have here the beginnings of the national life of Israel, the elements of the national life are to be sought in an earlier period. There is not only community of race among the Israelite bondmen, there is also a community of religion which, more than their separate abode, preserves them from intermixture with their neighbours, and at once binds them together and furnishes the motive for their desire to depart. The servitude of centuries has not crushed out their feeling of brotherhood nor obliterated the recollection of the promise given to their fathers. It is impossible to explain the solid movement of the whole body, notwithstanding their own cowardice, and in spite of the oppression of Egypt, except by the fact that they had already a consciousness of a Divine calling and the prospect of a settled home. Whatever may have been their religious observances in Egypt, they evidently did not acknowledge the gods of the country, but regarded themselves as belonging to a God who made Himself

known to their fathers, and who could say, "All the earth is mine" (xix. 5). It was not the law given at Sinai that made them for the first time the people of Jehovah; it was the covenant, on which the law rested, that bound them to Him as a peculiar treasure; and that covenant, though it assumed a more definite form at the Exodus, went back to the time of their fathers in Canaan.*

4. *Connection with subsequent Books.*—On the other hand, this Book of Exodus is so related to the subsequent books that they would be incomprehensible apart from it. We have here the record of events which became fundamental parts of the nation's traditions, and the explanation of ideas and expressions which wrought themselves into the thoughts and literature of all succeeding times. The great deliverance from Egypt is celebrated in national song, underlies all the historical writings, and by the earliest of the prophets is assumed as a matter not to be disputed; so that even critics who maintain that this account of the Exodus was written very late do not deny the historical character of the event. The prophets not only appeal to the facts, but attach to them the same religious significance with which they are here invested; † the very language employed in chapter iv. 22, 23, is used by Hosea, and made the basis of his argument with the degenerate people of his time (Hos. xi. 1).

Equally fundamental is the idea that Israel is "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation" (xix. 6); "all Israel is considered, from the theocratic point of view, a sacerdotal body, a people of priests." ‡ It was, indeed, this conviction that Israel as a nation was God's peculiar people that enabled them to fulfil their destiny; and though the abuse of the truth led them into careless indifference or haughty self-sufficiency, the truth was there, and could be appealed to from time to time by the teachers who arose among them, so as to arouse the national conscience. We must not lose sight of the fact that God reveals Himself first as the Lord of the whole earth, and shows his power alike upon Pharaoh and upon the forces of nature; and then in virtue of this power assumes to Himself Israel as his peculiar treasure. The prophet Amos gives precisely the same view of God's relations to Israel (Amos ix. 6, 7); and equally inconsistent with it is the perversion of it by the Jews into the principle that Jehovah was only the God of Israel, and the view of some in

* See chap. vi. 1—8, and compare what is written in Rom. iv. and Gal. iii.

† Amos iii. 1—2; Hosea xii. 9; xiii. 4.

‡ The quotation is from Reuss, the father of the Grafian hypothesis, on Hosea iv. 6, and forms an instructive contrast to the view of some that there was no priest-people till after the Exile.

modern times that the idea of Jehovah as a national God expanded into the idea of Jehovah as the Lord of the whole earth.

As regards the observances and laws contained in this book, it is possible that some of them are based on older and simpler usages. The mention of a feast and sacrifice in chapters v. 1—3, x. 9, seems to point to something of this kind, as also the mention of priests in chapter xix. 22, 24, before the formal setting apart of the sons of Levi in chapter xxviii. 1. So there seems to have been a “tent of meeting” outside the camp (xxxiii. 7—11) before the Tabernacle was set up. Yet, if there was such earlier usages, they received at the Exodus a new destination and distinctive meaning, so that in the succeeding history they are traced back to this period and associated with its great events.

5. *Literary Form.*—In literary form the book does not present the same regularity as that of Genesis. A merely cursory reading is sufficient to show that there is not a precise chronological arrangement in the narrative, nor an artistic arrangement of the laws. Thus, for example, after it has been told how Moses and Aaron had an interview with Pharaoh (chap. v.), their genealogy is given in chapter vi., and they are spoken of as if they were mentioned for the first time. Again, in chapter xvi. 33—34 mention is made of the laying up of a pot of manna before the Testimony, although the making of the Ark of the Testimony is not described till chapter xxv. So also chapter xxxiv. contains commands which had already been given in chapter xxiii.

In general we may say that the book does not by any means give a full account of all that happened in the period to which it refers, and that there is no attempt to set down the laws in a systematised form. It should not be forgotten that the book was written for a people to whom the events of the history were a common tradition, and among whom the observances were matters of established usage, the object being to exhibit them in their beginnings. Accordingly it has the appearance rather of a collection of separate pieces, put together substantially in the form in which they were originally composed, than of a sustained orderly composition. Yet, though literary criticism may succeed in exhibiting, in a general way, the several pieces, the attempt to trace the sources from which they came is far from successful, much less the endeavour to assign their respective orders and dates. From the prevalent practice of writing in Egypt long before the time of the Exodus, and from the several occasions in which writing is distinctly mentioned in the book, it is natural to conclude that tables of laws and narratives of events com-

posed in the wilderness were handed down to a succeeding time; and from the modest way in which Moses is mentioned, as contrasted with the tone of Deuteronomy xxxiv. 10—12, which is from a later hand, it is reasonable to suppose that the great law-giver himself left such written documents, which were made use of in the composition of the book as it now lies before us. The mere fact that the book exhibits this composite character is against the idea that it is a late fabrication, designed to give support to an unhistorical tradition.

The view put forward in recent times that the legislation contained in the sections xx. 22—xxiii., xxiv. belongs to the time of settlement in Canaan and allows worship by sacrifice at any place is inconsistent with xxiii. 17, xxxiv. 23—24. The circumstances of the life of the desert as compared with the scattering of the people over the country of Canaan would lead us to expect that worship at a central sanctuary preceded, and did not follow, the worship at different places.

6. *Modern Discoveries.*—Modern research has contributed much to show the accuracy of details of various kinds contained in the Book of Exodus. There is evinced an acquaintance with the physical features and social life of ancient Egypt and with the topography of the desert which could only have been gained in the circumstances which the book describes; and as our knowledge of those times increases the minute accuracy of the records becomes more striking. It has been shown that the “plagues” of Egypt were intensified forms of common visitations, and that the order in which they occur agrees with the progression of the seasons in that country; and though our knowledge of the ancient topography is yet very imperfect, the results of recent explorations lead us to expect important revelations in this direction in the future.

Upper Egypt, with its monuments above ground, is better known to us than the Delta, where ancient remains, if they exist, lie buried under the soil; but the discoveries made quite recently at Tell-el-Maskhûtah show us what might be expected from more extended excavations. It is now well known that there were in the Delta tribes of kindred origin and language to the Israelites; and when Abraham went down to sojourn in the country, the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings were reigning in the land, and he found no difficulty in holding intercourse with the people. It is also pretty well agreed that Ramses II. was the Pharaoh of the oppression, and Menephtah II., who began to reign in 1325 B.C., the Pharaoh of the Exodus; counting back from which date 430 years, for the sojourn of Israel in Egypt, we come to one of the Shepherd Kings to whom Joseph may

have been prime minister. The excavations at Tell-el-Maskhûta have brought to light Pithom in the region of Succoth, which was built by Ramses II., and exhibited extensive store chambers such as the Israelites are related to have built (chap. i. 11). Thus, although as yet actual traces of Israel in Egypt may not be said to be found, it is very hazardous to predict, as some have been bold enough to do, that such will not be found. The accuracy of the narrative is, at all events, exhibited in a remarkable manner, and this leads us to look for more light as research goes on.

The discoveries which have been mentioned seem likely also to clear up the obscurity resting on the route followed by the Israelites in their departure from Egypt. A closer study of the topography leads to the conclusion that the Red Sea extended, at the time of the Exodus, considerably farther north than at present, and that in all probability the *Yam Sûph*, or Sea of Reeds (translated Red Sea in our Bibles), which the people crossed, corresponded to what at a later time took the form of one of the lakes. Etham "in the edge of the wilderness" (xiii. 20) no doubt corresponds to the Egyptian frontier district of Atuma, in which a document of the time of the Exodus represents shepherds as pasturing their flocks; and it is to be expected that continued patient exploration will bring to light from old papyri and from the mounds of the Delta many similar confirmations of the accuracy of the simple narrative of the Book of Exodus.

7. *Credibility.*—We come to the conclusion that, in the Book of Exodus, we have a credible account of the great events connected with the departure of Israel from Egypt, and of their consolidation, under a constitution given by the hand of Moses, into a nation with a great future before them. This conclusion is confirmed by the minute accuracy of details just referred to, and is the only conclusion that seems in keeping with an unbiassed interpretation of the concurrent testimony of the nation from the earliest times. It seems also to be more credible in itself than the supposition that a number of tribes, with the slightest bonds of national coherence, found their way by merely natural impulse into Canaan, and there grew into an independent people with distinctive religious faith and institutions.

No doubt the legislation which is ascribed to Moses had prospective reference to a settled life in a country like Palestine, and the ordinances of worship and ceremonial are very detailed and minute. But this is no valid objection if it is borne in mind that Egypt was a land in which the people of Israel must have become familiar with an organised ritual, and if it be admitted

that the Exodus was not an aimless departure, but a start for a country associated with the memory of the fathers of the nation, a country whose condition, as the most recent discoveries prove, had long been familiar to dwellers in Egypt.

To what extent the laws as originally given were modified in course of time, and how far, in their original forms, they corresponded with what now stands written in the law books, we shall probably never know, because we do not know precisely through what process these books passed; but to deny the substantial accuracy of the record before us is an excess of criticism which would not be applied to other ancient documents, and would make it almost impossible to determine the true course of the succeeding history.

LEVITICUS.

1. *Name.*—The third book of the Pentateuch, beginning with the words “Then called the Lord unto Moses,” is simply entitled in the Hebrew Bible “Then called” . . . The names by which the Jews indicate its contents are “The Book of the Law of Offerings,” or, more commonly, “The Book of the Law of the Priests;” and the latter is, strictly speaking, more appropriate than the Greek name of *Leviticus* which we now employ, since the “Levites” are only mentioned once, and that incidentally (chap. xxv. 32, 33), in the whole book, whereas the “priests” are everywhere referred to.

The book, though closely connected with those of Exodus and Numbers, is distinguished from them in being entirely of legislative contents. Yet the legislation is set in an historical framework. The scene is laid in Sinai (xxv. 1, xxvi. 46, xxvii. 34); the circumstances of the desert life are referred to or implied (iv. 12, xiii. 46, xiv. 8, xvi. 10, &c.); details are given of the putting into execution of certain of the regulations (viii.—x.); and an incident of the desert life is mentioned as giving occasion to the promulgation of a particular law (xxiv. 10—23).

2. *Contents.*—The laws contained in this book have less of a moral and civil than of a religious and ceremonial character. They are, for the most part, such laws as would be committed to the priests for execution, or whose observance would be under their special care, the functions and standing of the priests themselves being included among them. The first seven chapters deal with the various offerings: the Burnt Offering (i.), the Meal* Offering (ii.), the Peace Offering (iii.), the Sin Offering (iv.—v. 13), and the Trespass Offering (v. 14—vi. 7). The regulations concerning these are followed by special instructions to the priests with regard to their due observance (vi. 8—vii. 38); and

* So the Revised Version rightly translates the word denoting the bloodless offering, which the Authorized Version renders meat-offering.

in chapters viii. to x. we have a detailed description of the consecration of Aaron and his sons, with an account of the offence of Nadab and Abihu, and certain regulations, suggested by the occurrence, for the proper performance of the priestly functions.

The five succeeding chapters deal with matters of uncleanness and purification. Thus we have in chapter xi. a list of the animals that may and of those that may not be used for food, and the ceremonies to be used in cases of defilement by those that are impure; in chapter xii. the laws for purification after childbirth; and in chapters xiii. to xv., the laws of leprosy and other defilements. The sixteenth chapter contains the institution of the Day of Atonement and the ceremonial of its observance. The seventeenth chapter contains the law forbidding the eating of blood, and the eighteenth, introduced by the words "I am the Lord your God," contains the laws of consanguinity and the forbidden degrees of marriage.

The next two chapters (xix., xx.) are closely related, the former beginning with the words "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy," and the latter ending, "Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples that ye should be mine." They are of very varied contents, warnings against idolatry and the idolatrous customs of the neighbouring nations (xix. 4, xx. 2—5, 23) being mixed with commands of a moral character, injunctions to respect the aged and to deal kindly with the afflicted, directions for the sowing and reaping of the ground, and laws of cleanliness and chastity. Then begins another series of ritual and religious laws, chapters xxi. and xxii. relating to the proper condition of officiating priests and the quality of the offerings; chapter xxiii. enumerating and explaining the set feasts; chapter xxiv. ordaining the oil for the sacred lamps and flour for the shewbread, and containing also the law on blasphemy, with which are combined a few other regulations.

Chapter xxv. contains the laws for the Sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee, and chapter xxvi. looks like a conclusion to the whole book. It has a solemn call to keep God's statutes and commandments, with specific promises in case of obedience and threatenings even more explicit in case of disobedience; and ends, "These are the statutes and judgments and laws which the Lord made between Him and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses." Yet, after this formal conclusion, we have in chapter xxvii. regulations for vows and things devoted, concluding again in a similar manner, "These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai."

3. Arrangement.—The foregoing summary is sufficient to show how little regard has been had to systematic arrangement of the materials of the Book of Leviticus; and a closer inspection reveals other literary peculiarities of a striking kind. It is observable that the laws appear in the form of separate collections, the several groups being very often provided with special headings and conclusions; that laws relating to the same matters are not all found in the same place; that there are repetitions of the same laws in different parts of the book; and that matters of a very dissimilar nature stand in close proximity.

The commands are all expressly or implicitly ascribed to God; but the mode in which they are proclaimed, and the persons to whom they are addressed, are very various. As a rule it is said that “the Lord spake unto Moses,” but sometimes we have “the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron,” and we find even “the Lord spake unto Aaron” (x. 8). And when it is Moses that is primarily addressed, he is told sometimes to “speak unto the children of Israel,” sometimes “to speak unto” or “command Aaron and his sons,” at other times to “speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel,” or to “speak unto Aaron and his sons, and all the children of Israel.” These are not all the varieties in the modes of address, and the laws with similar headings are found scattered up and down the book in the most striking manner. Even the first seven chapters, which seem to form a code by themselves regulating the offerings, and have a formal conclusion (vii. 37, 38), are interrupted several times by such separate headings. Again, a comparison of chapter xviii. with chapter xx. will bring out the fact that many of the regulations are repeated in the same or similar words; and there are many other instances of repetitions in other places.

The laws, in fact, seem to bear on their own face that they were given forth “at sundry times and in divers manners.” And when we remember that the whole period intervening between the setting up of the Tabernacle described in the end of Exodus, and the departure from Sinai, was but a month and twenty days,* within which time the events recorded in the early chapters of Numbers took place, it will appear far from probable that the laws in this Book of Leviticus were promulgated in one body during the brief remaining time. Far more likely is it that just as Moses was enjoined to make the Tabernacle “after the pattern that was shown him in the Mount,”† so we have here before us the detailed regulations for the worship and life of the people which, according to the revelations received by him at

* Compare Exodus xl. 17 with Numbers x. 11.

† Exodus xxv. 40; xxvi. 30; xxvii. 8.

Sinai, were given forth from time to time to the persons concerned, and that they were preserved in their separate form.

4. *Character of the Legislation.*—It is also observable that, though we have in this book regulations extending to the minutest details of worship and life, these are, in many cases, stated in such terms as to imply that the persons to whom they are addressed had already some acquaintance with them. Observances are referred to as if they were already understood, and the laws bearing upon them have the appearance of regulations of practices already existing. Thus the very first laws of the book begin with the words, “If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord,” &c. (i. 2, ii. 1, iii. 1), as if it were a well-established custom to do so. In the same way, the regulations in regard to vows (xxvii.) presuppose the custom of making such; and many of the prescriptions, as, for example, those relating to the rending of clothes and the cutting of the flesh for the dead (x. 6, xix. 27—28), have reference to customs which evidently are well known and commonly practised. It is thus implied, as it is everywhere implied in the Pentateuch, that God’s people had a religion and a worship before the time of Moses. Cain and Abel bring offerings, which are both denominated by a general name, which in Leviticus is used exclusively to denote the bloodless offering (Gen. iv. 3—5); Noah builds an altar and offers burnt offerings (Gen. viii. 20—22); Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob build altars and call upon the name of the Lord; and the covenant with Abraham is ratified over the bodies of such animals as are prescribed in the law for sacrifice (Gen. xv. 9—21). So also, during the struggle with Pharaoh which preceded the Exodus, the leaders repeatedly demand that the people should be allowed to go and worship and offer sacrifices to their God in the wilderness.*

The peculiar form which the pre-Mosaic offerings exhibits, and the general terms in which they are mentioned, show that the writer of the Book of Genesis does not seek to transfer to patriarchal times what was a later institution, but that he regards them as instances of a more primitive usage. The distinction of clean and unclean animals, also, is pre-Mosaic, and so is the prohibition of blood. We know, moreover, that the nations with whom Israel was early brought into contact had well-defined systems of worship. Phoenician and Assyrian monuments show that these nations had sacrificial and other rites resembling those of the Hebrews, and the Egyptians had a most elaborate priestly system. Laban the Syrian is as familiar with sacrifice as his kinsman Jacob (Gen. xxxi. 54), and

* See Exodus, § 4, p. 29.

Jethro, the priest of Midian, "takes a burnt offering and sacrifices for God," and Aaron and all the elders of Israel "come and eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God" (Exod. xviii. 12). The peculiarity of the Mosaic system is that, recognising such primitive and general customs, it gives a new sanction and significance to them, and so directs and employs them as to provide an orderly system for the regulation of the life of the people.

Above all, the observances are lifted out of the sphere of mere common and immemorial usage and endued with significance as symbols of the religious beliefs of Israel and memorials of great events in their history. They are thus made to minister to the nation's training and development by knitting them together in a visible bond around the recollection of their national birth. The Sabbath itself, which is as old as the race and a distinctive memorial of the creation, is also made a sign of the special covenant between God and Israel (Exod. xxxi. 12-17), and even associated with the deliverance from Egypt (Deut. v. 15). The three great pilgrimage feasts, the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, fell at three well-marked periods of the agricultural year: the Passover at the beginning of barley harvest, Pentecost at the close of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Tabernacles at the final ingathering of the fruits. Yet, though this reference to the seasons of the year is preserved in the ceremonial prescribed for the feasts, a new and higher reference is added. The Passover is pre-eminently a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt; and the booths of branches in which the people are enjoined to dwell at the Feast of Tabernacles are to remind them of the time when they dwelt in tents in the wilderness.

5. *Unity.*—Besides the regulation and consecration of earlier usages, and the quickening of national sentiment, we have to notice very particularly the mode in which, from even the most minute prescription as to food or dress up to the most distinctive sacred rite, everything is calculated to stimulate and educate the religious feeling and the spiritual life. Sanitary and dietary laws are not laid down as such, but are made distinctive marks of the consecrated life of a chosen people; details of ritual are not prescribed with a view to enhance the imposing character of the forms of worship, but to express the sense of the holiness of the God in whose service they are exercised.

At the recurring festal seasons Israel is not simply to "rejoice as the nations" * because a bountiful nature provides the supply of material wants, but to rejoice before the Lord and remember

* Hosea ix. 1.

His special goodness to His own people. They are taught that the season does not hallow the ordinance, but the ordinance the season ; and the ritual of the most ordinary kind is so ordered, and a gradation from lower to higher in the feasts is so marked, that the deeper necessities of the heart are felt and provided for. The sin-offering, and the impressive ceremonial of the Day of Atonement may be said to be the culminating points of the Levitical offerings, tending to awaken the sense of sin, and the need of forgiveness, and to impress the dullest mind with the spiritual meaning of the whole system.

It is from this point of view that we observe the unity that pervades what seems at first a confused and imperfectly organised body of laws. Israel is to be a holy people, because the Lord their God is holy. Therefore no detail of their life is common or secular, no customary observance a mere custom, no rite a mere ceremony. Hence, in the statement of the laws, there is no sharp distinction between ceremonial, civil, and sacred ; particulars relating to the one or the other are found closely connected, because all come under the one common category of " holiness to the Lord." In the same way, while primitive usages resting on the instinctive feelings of worship are consecrated with a new reference, usages of heathen nations, which had become associated with idolatry, are prohibited. The people of Israel were thus at every turn reminded that they were a peculiar people ; and, in the infancy of their national life, by means of these outward and carnal ordinances, they were being taught, in an elementary way suited to their comprehension, what, in the full light of the Gospel, is the highest law of spiritual activity : " Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

6. *Critical Views.*—The Book of Leviticus forms the greater part of what critics of the advanced school call the Levitical Code, the composition of which is by them ascribed to the time succeeding the Exile.* It is maintained that no such collection of laws as this book contains could have been promulgated in the Mosaic period or for long after it ; that, on the contrary, the distinctive feasts of Israel grew up in Palestine, by natural processes, out of agricultural festivals such as were practised by the Canaanite inhabitants ; and that the elaborate system of the Levitical Code was the result of the studies of the scribes during the Exile, and an attempt to give a high authority to later usages and to laws which then came into operation for the first time, by the fiction of ascribing them to Moses. In support of this view

* See Introduction to the Pentateuch, § 10, pp 11, 12.

it is held that the legislation of this Code exhibits a more developed priestly and religious character than either the Book of the Covenant or the Deuteronomic Code; and also that there is no trace of the observance of the Levitical Code in the pre-Exilian history.

Two instances will be sufficient to show how inconclusive and misleading is this mode of reasoning. Regulations for the observance of the Passover are contained in all the three Codes;* and it no doubt fell, as has been already said (§ 4), at the time of an old spring festival. But, whereas the two so-called older Codes make no reference to an agricultural ceremony, and expressly say that it is to be observed in the month of Abib, because in that month the children of Israel came out of Egypt, the Levitical Code, which on the theory ought to show a development beyond natural custom, prescribes the waving of a sheaf of barley as an observance at the Passover time (Lev. xxiii. 9—14), and thus suggestively connects it with the beginning of barley harvest.

Again, it is quite true that there is no mention of the observance of the Day of Atonement in the pre-Exilian historical writings; but neither is it mentioned in the post-Exilian Books of Chronicles. Indeed, because it is not mentioned with other feasts observed on the return from Babylon, some critics go the length of maintaining that its institution dates even later than the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. But, on their own principle, they ought to go farther; for the first mention of the Day of Atonement, outside the Levitical Code, occurs in the writings of Josephus and Philo and the New Testament; so that we should have the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews basing his argument from the imperfection of the old Levitical system on an ordinance which was instituted almost in his own day. Indeed, the silence of the post-Exilian writings is, in some particulars, as remarkable as that of the pre-Exilian, and proves that this whole mode of reasoning on the subject cannot be relied upon.

7. *Credibility and Value.*—Although the silence of the historical books as to the Levitical system is remarkable, and although we know that the actual worship of the Israelites was far short of the ideal, we must not hastily conclude that the law was a dead letter and of none effect. Many things took place in the history that do not find a place in the historical books; and the observance of outward rites and ceremonies, even if it was mixed with superstition, was a bond uniting the people together. The observances themselves were standing witnesses and perpetual

* Exod. xxiii. 15 (compare xii. 17); xxxiv. 18; Deut. xvi. 1—8; Lev. xxiii. 4—8.

memorials of the religion and of the facts which they symbolized, just as the Christian sacraments administered in the most superstitious ages of the Church were visible memorials of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity.

And there were always in Israel, as in every nation, some who could look beneath the surface and derive edification from what, to the mass around them, was a dead form. The fundamental truths underlying the system, and the meaning of the symbolism, were not lost sight of, as the writings of the prophets testify; and the value of the law as a spiritual educator is clearly evident from many of the Psalms. But such a stage of religious consciousness could only have come to maturity by slow degrees. The expressive ceremonial of oft-repeated sacrifice must have been to the reflective and pious in Old Testament times a stepping-stone to the sacrifice of broken hearts. Not only to us, in the light of the New Testament, does the ritual of Leviticus reflect the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, but these things must have been, as the writer to the Hebrews expresses it, "a figure for the time then present," "a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. ix. 9, x. 1), and thus served, in God's providence, to prepare for the manifestation of Him who was to be "the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Rom. x. 4).

NUMBERS.

1. *Name.*—The name *Numbers*, by which the fourth book of the Pentateuch is commonly designated, is the Latin equivalent of the title given by the Greek translators of the Old Testament. It was employed with reference to the two numberings of the people which appear prominently in the book, in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first instance (chapter i.), and afterwards in the plains of Moab (xxvi.). In the same way the Jews, when they designate this book by its contents, call it “Musterings;” but it is more commonly indicated, in the same manner as the other books of the Pentateuch, by one of the opening words, “Then spake” or “In the wilderness,” taken from the first verse, “Then spake the Lord unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai.” The book resembles Exodus in that it is partly narrative and partly legislative in contents, and presents the two elements in close combination; but in situation it stands closely related to Leviticus, and is its natural continuation.

2. *Divisions and Contents.*—The Book of Numbers may be divided into three sections. In the first section, embracing chapters i. to x., the scene is, as in Leviticus, at Sinai, and the contents are very closely related to those of that book. It begins with the command to number the people, given on the first day of the second month of the second year from the departure from Egypt, or exactly a month after the Tabernacle was set up, as noted in Exodus xl. 17. The first two chapters relate how the numbering was effected, and give the order in which the various tribes were commanded to encamp and to march on the wilderness journey. As the Levites were not numbered with the other tribes, we are then told, in the third and fourth chapters, how a separate enumeration of them was made, as also of the firstborn males of all the people, for whom the Levites were substituted to perform the sacred service of the Tabernacle. These chapters also define the different parts of service in which the different families of the Levites were employed. The next two chapters are legislative in character, containing regulations for the exclu-

sion of lepers from the camp, the law of restitution for trespass, the ceremony of the water of jealousy, the law of the Nazarite, and the formula to be employed by the priests in blessing the people. The seventh chapter describes the offerings brought by the princes of the tribes, on twelve successive days, on the occasion of the dedication of the Tabernacle; and the eighth relates to the lighting of the lamps of the golden candlestick, and describes the consecration of the Levites to the service of the sanctuary. In the ninth chapter we have an account of the observance of the Passover at Sinai, and regulations for the observance of a supplementary Passover in the second month by any who should be ceremonially unable to do so at the statutory time. This section concludes with an account of the manner in which the pillar of cloud regulated the movements of the camp (ix. 15—23), and the way in which the silver trumpets were employed to give signals for concerted action (x. 1—10).

The *second* section of the book (x. 11—xxii. 1) is concerned with the journey from Sinai to Moab, and covers the period from the twentieth day of the second month of the second year to the fortieth year of the Exodus. It does not profess to give an account of all that passed in this long period; it does not even give a condensed and orderly account of the doings and movements of the people. It gives rather a series of episodes in the wilderness life, with various laws, arranged, however, mainly in chronological order, up to the time when the people "came into the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho." Thus we have the murmurings and unbelief of the people at Taberah, where they were punished by burning (xi. 1—3); at Kibroth-hattaavah, where the Spirit was poured out upon the seventy elders, and the people were rebuked by the sending of the quails (xi. 4—35); and finally at Kadesh, after the return of the spies, when the sentence of forty years' wandering was pronounced (xiii., xiv.). So we have the revolt of Aaron and Miriam against the authority of Moses punished by the leprosy of Miriam (xii.); and the revolt of Korah and his company punished by the death of the revolters and rebuked by the sign of Aaron's rod (xvi., xvii.). Interspersed with these historical notices, we have various laws, in chapters xv., xviii., and xix., conspicuous among which is the ceremonial of the water of purification made from the ashes of the red heifer (xix.). The next two chapters describe the journey from Kadesh, round Edom, and through the territories of Arad, Sihon, and Og, into the plains of Moab, with the episodes of the unbelief of Moses and Aaron at Meribah (xx. 2—13), and the visitation of the fiery serpents (xxi. 5—9).

In the *last* section of the book (xxii. 2—xxxvi.) the Israelites

are in the plains of Moab. Balaam, sent by Balak to curse them, pronounces on them a remarkable blessing (xxii. 2—xxiv. 25); the relapse into idolatry at Shittim is signally punished (xxv.); another numbering of the people is made (xxvi.); Joshua is designated as the successor of Moses (xxvii. 12—23); the two tribes and a half receive their inheritance on the east of Jordan (xxxii.); directions are given for the division of the land to the remaining tribes (xxxiv.); and regulations made for setting apart forty-eight cities of the Levites, of which six are to be cities of refuge (xxxv.). In the midst of these matters this section also has a chapter relating to the encounter with the Midianites, through whose instigation Israel had been led into sin at Shittim (xxxii.); a list of the wilderness stations (xxxiii. 1—49); and a number of laws, on inheritance, the relation of Israel to the heathen nations, and feasts and offerings (xxvii. 1—11, xxviii.—xxx., xxxiii. 50—56, xxxvi.): the whole concluding with the words “These are the commandments and the judgments which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho.”

3. *Period covered by the Book.*—A long and important period of the history of Israel is covered by the book of Numbers. If we deduct the fourteen months spent in the journey from Egypt to Sinai and in the vicinity of the sacred mountain, the whole remaining portion of the forty years spent between Egypt and Canaan falls within the book.

Now, when we remember that the first ten chapters refer to the sojourn at Sinai, and that the rest of the book, as we have seen, consists mainly of episodes in the remaining journey, with laws and regulations of considerable amount, it will be seen that we have almost no record of about thirty-eight years of the desert life. There is, indeed, a marked difference in the manner in which the journey to Sinai with the events that occurred there, and the subsequent journey to Kadesh, are related, and the brief account given of the movements of the succeeding thirty-eight years. Whereas we can trace the advance of the host from the shores of the Red Sea to the foot of the sacred mount, and can follow the line of their progress from Sinai to Kadesh, the long years of penal wandering are passed over in a few words; and a bare list of the stations, with a few episodes of the journey, make up all the notice we have of the whole period. Events are crowded into fourteen months in a manner that makes it difficult to find room for them, but the events of thirty-eight years, if we except those of the closing year, are left almost entirely to conjecture.

It is only from an observation of the localities in which the time was spent, and a consideration of the condition of the people at its close, that we can form any idea of the life of Israel during the years of wandering. It may be that no great events are recorded because there were none to relate, and that, for the most part, the daily life of the people for these thirty-eight years was little more than the monotonous round of caring for the existence of themselves and their flocks, which makes up the life of the children of the desert at the present day. Yet the period was not without its effect on the character of the future nation. Like the long uneventful period of the sojourn in Egypt, it formed a stage of transition. A new race, inured to the hardships of the wilderness, grew up; collisions with neighbouring tribes and peoples, of which we have notices or indications, trained them to the use of arms; the necessities of their daily life called forth individual courage, self-help, self-reliance, while they were preserved from degenerating into a number of petty isolated tribes by the constitution which had been set up at Sinai.

4. *The Desert of the Wandering.*—It has often been wondered how the desert provided subsistence or even afforded room for the large host of Israel during so many years. Some have even declared the account of the forty years' wandering to be altogether incredible, or merely a legendary growth of late tradition, devised to magnify the early history of the nation. But a closer examination of the physical character of the peninsula of Sinai and the Desert of the Wandering, made by explorers in recent times, as well as an observation of the modes of life of the present inhabitants, while they have shown that many of the popular conceptions in regard to the desert have to be modified or abandoned, have also proved that the Biblical accounts relating to this period are not to be summarily rejected as unhistorical.

In dealing with the Book of Exodus (§ 6) it was pointed out that excavations in the Delta have thrown new light upon the accounts of the sojourn of Israel in Egypt and the route they followed on their departure. In the same way, the route from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai has of late years been found to present the features ascribed to it by the Biblical writers. On one important point, in regard to which uncertainty had existed, we have now certain information: the peak known by the name of Jebel Sufsâfeh, forming the northern end of the traditional Mount Sinai, is found to have all the features answering to the description of the Mount from which the law was proclaimed, with a plain in front of it sufficient to accommodate the assembled people on that memorable occasion.

The Desert of Sinai itself, it is now known, was capable of supporting a large population at the time of the Exodus. The Pharaohs of that time maintained a garrison in the peninsula to look after the numerous workmen employed in iron, copper, and turquoise mines. The remains of smelting furnaces prove that a large amount of timber must have been consumed in these operations; although timber has now entirely disappeared, and with it what must have been a considerable fertility has vanished. Even at the present day the peninsula contains many valleys watered by pleasant streams and teeming with natural vegetation; and the trees that in certain spots have been spared, as well as others that had been planted by old monkish colonists, show how the mountain torrents which are common at certain seasons, and plentiful rain, such as we know fell when Israel was in Sinai,* may be restrained and turned to good account. With an almost total neglect of cultivation, and a simple dependence on what Nature sends, the country supports a large number of Arabs with their flocks,† and must have been immensely more productive at the time of the Exodus.

It is also possible to follow the general course of the Israelites, though perhaps as yet not to identify their successive halting-places, as they emerged from the rocky peninsula and entered upon the wilderness of Paran, in which they spent the years of wandering. Here also the country must have undergone great physical changes. The district immediately to the north of the Desert of the Wandering, known as the Negeb or South Country, retains numerous traces of extensive vineyards and careful cultivation, and, though it is now little else than a barren waste, must have been at least as fertile as the cultivated parts of Palestine are at the present day. The blight of barrenness, however, has fallen upon the whole country, and shows itself in increasing intensity as we proceed southward. We are therefore safe in concluding that the wilderness of Paran, bare and bleak as it is now, was in former times proportionately fertile. The numerous traces of human dwellings, even in what are now the barest portions, and, in more favoured places, the remains of dams and terraces to husband the rainfall, show that the country was capable of supporting a large population.

5. *The Desert Life.*—From the physical conditions of the country

* See Psalms lxviii. 7—9; lxxvii. 17.

† The lamented Professor Palmer, to whom we are indebted for the best recent information, as the result of his expedition at the outbreak of the Egyptian rebellion, estimated the whole number of Sinai Arabs capable of military service, taking the Desert as far east as Petra, and the peninsula itself, at about 50,000.

and the mode of life of its present inhabitants, we can form some idea of the daily life of the Israelites during their long wandering in the desert. It would be a mistake to suppose that the whole multitude marched day after day, and pitched night after night, for forty long years, making an endless round of the desert. A continuous forward movement, no doubt, was made in the journey to Sinai, and afterwards in the journeys from Sinai to Kadesh, and from Kadesh to the plains of Moab, when there was a distinct goal in view. But during the thirty-eight years, the tribes would be scattered over the wilderness to seek pastureage for their flocks, according to the custom of the Arabs at the present day, the Tabernacle, surrounded by the Levites and the leaders, forming the rallying point, which, like the camp at head-quarters of a modern tribe, was moved from time to time as occasion required.

The stations given in the list in chap. xxxiii. are, in all probability, the stations at which the Tabernacle was successively set up, while the tribes may have been dispersed to considerable distances on all sides. In a similar way the Arab tribes are found at a distance of many miles from the headquarters of their camp, according to the exigencies of their flocks; and we are to suppose that, though miraculous provision was made for the wants of Israel, the ordinary provision of nature was not neglected, and that part of the purpose of the long sojourn in the desert was to inure them to hardship by daily toil as a preparation for the work of conquest that lay before them. So long as they wandered about in this scattered fashion, their movements would be a matter of indifference to the powerful and settled nations, on whose borders they hovered, just as the Arabs of the present day are not molested by the authorities of Egypt or Syria; but as soon as they made a concerted movement to advance upon Canaan, they were vigorously resisted (xiv. 40—45, xx. 14—21).

6. *Relation to succeeding Books.*—The fragmentary and brief details which are here recorded concerning the desert life are suggestive in view of the succeeding history of Israel. Very little is said about the worship of the people in this period; we are left to suppose that, while at the Tabernacle itself the ritual appointed at Sinai was in some manner observed, a great part of the people, owing to their distance, would not be able, or able only occasionally, to take part in it. In connection with the Passover observed at Sinai (ix. 1—14), regulations are given for the observance of the feast by those who could not celebrate it on the proper day. No doubt the circumstances of the daily life imposed similar restrictions in regard to other observances, and

from the narrative in Joshua v. we gather that distinctive requirements of the law had not been observed in the wilderness. We thus perceive, at the very outset of the nation's history, that anomaly which has perplexed criticism, of a law ordained and in force, while it was, to a great extent, neglected or held in abeyance.

There is an apparent inconsistency between the accounts of the setting up of an elaborate Tabernacle service and the statements of the prophets * that Israel in the wilderness served strange gods; but it is not the inconsistency of contradictory written accounts, but the inconsistency of human nature, of which Israel is ever a striking example. It is not necessary to go to the historical books, whether pre-Exilian or post-Exilian, for proofs of the non-observance or violation of the law. The books of the Pentateuch, which record its institution, give the most glaring instances of its violation; the golden calf was made under the very shadow of Sinai; the sin of Baal-Peor and the commotion of the mixed multitude show how deeply ingrained were the elements of heathenism; and from these books, which detail so minutely the ritual and worship, we cannot gather much as to the extent to which the ritual and worship were observed. Even at this early stage of their history, the people of Israel, chosen not for their own merits, and beloved in spite of their sins, are a witness to the eternal truth of the grace of God.

7. *Literary Features.*—The Book of Numbers, as a literary work, has the same features as the other books of the Pentateuch. The minute circumstantiality of detail, and the special suitability of many of the laws to the desert life, show that these materials belong to that early period. On the other hand, the expression "While the children of Israel were in the wilderness" (xv. 32) gives indication of a later hand in the composition; the "Book of the Wars of the Lord," from which a quotation is made (xxi. 14), was evidently an older production than the book that quotes it, and probably the same may be said of the other snatches of song quoted in the same chapter (verses 17—18, 27—30). Again, the fact that Moses is said to have written the list of stations given in chap. xxxiii. affords a presumption that he did not write the narrative which refers to it.

We find also the same indifference to strictly chronological order, and the same mixture of legal and historical matter that we find in Exodus; and some of the laws in this book are repetitions or supplements of laws already given in Leviticus.† But

* Hosea ix. 10; Amos v. 25 ff.; Ezek. xx. 15 ff. Compare Lev. xvii. 7.

† Compare, for example, Num. xv. 1—16 with Lev. i.—vii.; Num. v. 5—10 with Lev. v. 5 ff., vi. 5 ff.; Num. xv. 22—28 with Lev. iv. 13 ff.

literary features like these, and the complexity of the whole situation disclosed in this book, preclude the supposition that we have before us a late and legendary story. An invented story would have presented fewer difficulties, and a story of late time would have betrayed itself by late ideas. A writer desirous of ascribing late laws to the Mosaic time would have been careful to show also the early observance of the laws; an Exilian writer could have no practical object to gain in devising laws which were fitted only for the desert life, and could by no possibility come into operation in post-Exilian times.

The close resemblance of such laws as those for priestly purification, the water of jealousy, and the red heifer, to Egyptian customs, and the prominence given to laws of leprosy, which an ancient Egyptian tradition makes a disease specially affecting the Israelites, all point to a time when contact with Egypt was recent; and the friendly attitude of Israel to Edom and Moab, as well as the knowledge of the true God ascribed to Balaam, are not what we should have expected from a late writer. But, indeed, it is misleading to speak of later tradition, when we find, as even advanced critics admit, that the earliest of the writing prophets have the same view of the early history of their people as is here presented. The tradition is one of the earliest and most deeply rooted that Israel possessed, so firmly embedded in their literature that, if we tear it out, we have nothing substantial left out of which to construct their early history. And though, from the brief and fragmentary manner in which the details of the desert life have come down to us, we may have difficulty in forming a clear and connected view of all the events, the mode in which the record is made, and the striking confirmations it receives from every side, leave no room to doubt that the story is true.

DEUTERONOMY.

1. *Name.*—The fifth book of the Pentateuch is, in the Hebrew Bible, designated by the expression “These are the words” . . . or simply “Words,” taken, as in the case of the titles of the preceding books, from the opening sentence. The name by which the book is now commonly known had its origin in the Septuagint rendering of chapter xvii. 18, where it is ordained that the future king shall “write him a copy of this law in a book.” The word translated in our version “Copy,” *i.e. duplicate*, has, in the hands of the Greek translators, been combined with the word “law,” so as to produce the expression which, in English guise, becomes *Deuteronomy*, *i.e.* Second or Repeated Law. The Jews also denote the book by the Hebrew phrase referred to, and, looking to the contents, understand the title in the sense of “Repetition of the Law.”

In situation, Deuteronomy stands in close connection with the Book of Numbers. Although the narrative is not formally taken up, the preceding history is supposed throughout, and the scene is still in the plains of Moab. The amount of time covered by the book is not long. It opens with the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year of the Exodus (i. 3); and as we learn from Joshua iv. 19 that it was on the tenth day of the first month of the following year that the passage of the Jordan took place, and from Deuteronomy xxxiv. 8 that the mourning for Moses lasted thirty days, there remain only forty days for the addresses by Moses to have been delivered and the other events to have occurred in which he was concerned.

2. *Literary Features.*—The Book of Deuteronomy at the first glance presents features that strikingly distinguish it from the preceding books. Though it is the natural completion of the Book of Numbers, bringing down the history to the death of Moses and the point at which the Israelites were about to enter into their promised inheritance, and although it presents the same combination of narrative and legislation which

is observable in Exodus and Numbers, yet the whole tone of the book is in marked contrast with that of any other book of the Pentateuch. We miss the customary formula of Leviticus, "The Lord spake unto Moses"; for Moses here speaks directly to the people in his own name, or enunciates laws as having been given previously through his mediation. The striking feature is the hortatory tone which pervades the book.

Apart from the few historical notices at the conclusion, the whole book may be said to be made up of a series of addresses by the great Lawgiver, in which he reviews the past and gives counsel and warning for the future. We have, first of all, an introductory discourse (i.—iv. 40), in which God's goodness and care in the past are dwelt upon as motives for faithful obedience to His laws. Chapter iv. 44 seems to be the heading of what follows, a section forming the greater part of the book, and giving it the character which has been associated with the name of Deuteronomy, as usually understood, Repetition of the Law. The section extending to the end of chapter xxvi. consists of one unbroken address, delivered by Moses "unto all Israel" (v. 1). The first part of this address, ending with the eleventh chapter, contains a repetition of the Decalogue, with a recital of the circumstances under which the covenant was made at Horeb, and emphasises particularly the first two commandments, the duty of serving God alone and of abstaining from all forms of idolatrous worship. The second part of the address, beginning with chapter xii., lays down more specifically "the statutes and judgments" which were to be observed in the land about to be possessed. These relate to matters of religion and worship (xii. 1—xvi. 17), the appointment and duties of judges and officers, modes of procedure in civil and criminal cases, and suchlike (xvi. 18—xxi. 23), and matters of a social and individual character (xxii. 1—xxvi. 19).

A third discourse begins at chapter xxvii., where "Moses and the elders of Israel" command that the people, after crossing the Jordan, shall inscribe "all the words of this law" on plastered stones on Mount Ebal, and, after offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, shall solemnly bind themselves, by blessing and cursing, to its faithful observance. In chapter xxviii. Moses himself unfolds in detail what the nature of the blessing and the curse shall be; and from this to the end of chapter xxx. he again urges faithfulness to the covenant thus ratified, in order that the promised blessing may follow. The next chapter (xxxii.) contains the commission of Joshua to carry on the work begun by Moses, the delivery of the written law to the priests and elders, with the charge to read it publicly before the assembled

people once in seven years, and the command of God to Moses to deliver to the people, in the form of a song, a recital of all His deeds for them, that it may in generations to come be a witness against them. The song itself is given in chapter xxxii. ; the following chapter has, also in poetical form, "the blessing where-with Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death" ; and the closing chapter, in brief but exalted style, tells how the great lawgiver, at God's command, went up "unto Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah," viewed the land on which he was not to set foot, and "died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord."

3. *The Situation.*—The hortatory character of Deuteronomy is in keeping with the situation in which the book presents Israel at this period. The wandering in the desert was at an end, the tribes were assembled in an orderly camp, and only the narrow stream of the Jordan separated them from the land which for generations they had been taught to regard as their inheritance. Everything depended on their fidelity to the God who had in covenant taken them for his peculiar people. Moses, recognising that he had only been the temporary minister of an abiding covenant, seeks to impress upon the people that the foundation of their existence as a nation lay in God's choice (vii. 7, 8 ; x. 15), and that the only hope of their achieving His purpose lay in their obedience to His law.

To impress the former point, he reviews at length the wonderful dealings of their God with them in the desert, and the earnest of the inheritance He had already given them in the partial possession on the east of the Jordan ; and in doing so, he is not careful to state events in their strictly chronological order, but groups them as best to suit the purpose of his exhortation. In regard to the latter point he speaks as a prophet. As he is convinced of the unchanging purpose of God, so he knows how prone the people had been from the beginning to swerve from the path of obedience, and, with unerring intuition, warns them of the dangers to which they would be particularly liable. Like all succeeding prophets, he deals in broad and general terms when he refers to the actual occurrences of the future : speaks as if the crossing of the Jordan would be followed by a sudden and almost peaceable possession of Canaan, and alludes in the most general way to the place which should ultimately become the religious centre, and the mode of government which in course of time would be set up. But with him, as with all other prophets, the moral and religious issues of the future are certainties : he sets before the people life and death, blessing and cursing (xi. 26, 27 ; xxx. 15, 19), assuring them that by no possibility

would prosperity be theirs unless they obeyed the voice of the Lord their God.

This prophetic tone has been heard on former occasions when the covenant relation between God and Israel had to be enforced. At Sinai, in connection with the giving of the first tables of the law and the reading of the Book of the Covenant, Moses impressed upon Israel the same truths in similar words (*Exodus xix. 4, 6; xxiii. 20, 33*). At the second giving of the tables of the law, we find the same thing (*Exodus xxxiv. 10, 16*); and at the close of the legislation of *Leviticus*, there is a whole chapter (*Leviticus xxvi.*) which anticipates what is more fully expressed in the twenty-eighth chapter of this book. The tone of warning thus swells louder and louder, and reaches its height when the covenant is ratified for the last time before the crossing of the Jordan. For on every high hill and in every shady grove of Canaan, the rights of an impure heathen worship were celebrated; and we need not wonder that Moses reiterates the words “Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God” (*xii. 4; xviii. 14*), and puts in the forefront of his address the two first commandments of the Decalogue; for he knew, and the succeeding history too plainly proved, that the seductions of the heathen worship were more formidable obstacles to the full occupation of the land than all the armed resistance of its inhabitants.

4. *Character of the Legislation.*—The situation of the people, on the eve of crossing the Jordan, also furnishes an explanation of the form in which the legislation of *Deuteronomy* is cast. That there should have been a repetition of the law along with the renewal of the covenant is in keeping with former experience, as the instances just mentioned prove. It was the more necessary on this occasion, seeing that the tribes had been for many years leading a nomadic life, and many of the observances of the law were neglected or held in abeyance.* Yet there is manifestly a special purpose in view in this case, which controls the form which the laws assume. The present position of the people and their prospects in the immediate future are the main objects of regard; and whatsoever would tend to bind them more closely together, and to preserve them faithful to God and pure from heathen contamination, is emphasised. It is “all Israel” that is addressed, the laws are such as concern the whole people, not special classes, and such as bear upon the development of the national life in a settled condition.

The legislation of *Deuteronomy* is not by any means a simple repetition of that of the preceding books, for the situation and

* See chap. xii. 8, and compare *Numbers*, § 6, pp. 46, 47.

purpose are different. Laws that had special reference to the life of the desert find no place ; and on certain subjects the legislation of Deuteronomy is at variance with that of the Levitical code. For example, in Leviticus xvii. 15 it is prescribed that whoever ate of what died of itself should be unclean until the evening ; but in Deuteronomy xiv. 21 such food is altogether forbidden to the Israelites : the law in the former case being more lax, doubtless because, in the desert, animal food was a greater rarity. In the same way, in Leviticus xvii. 2, it is ordained that all animals to be used for food should be slaughtered at the door of the Tabernacle, an ordinance practicable in the desert where, as among the modern Arabs, animal food is rarely eaten, not to mention the special reason given in the seventh verse ; but in Deuteronomy xii. 15 animals used for food may be killed and eaten in any place, a liberty rendered necessary by the circumstances of settled life in Canaan.

Again, there is a conspicuous absence of laws of a ritual and ceremonial kind, which bulk so largely in Leviticus ; for such laws would be under the special charge of the priestly class, and the acquaintance of the people with them was a matter of secondary importance. Whereas in Leviticus the "sons of Aaron" are distinguished from the general body of the Levites, and the functions of the priests and of the different families of the Levites are minutely specified, the Book of Deuteronomy uses the comprehensive expression "the priests the Levites," and scarcely refers to any distinction of privilege or function.* It is only in incidental notices that the distinction comes out (x. 6, xviii. 1, xxxiii. 8); yet, though such distinctions are left to the custody of the Levitical classes themselves, the due of the priests *from the people* is particularly mentioned (xviii. 3), and, in keeping with the whole situation of the book, the tribe of Levi, which was to have no territorial inheritance, is repeatedly commended to the generosity of the other tribes.

The presence of laws relating to clean and unclean foods, the marriage relation and personal purity, such as bulk largely in Leviticus, and of other laws relating to judges, officers, and legal processes, which are scarcely found in that book, is ac-

* In the earlier stage of criticism, when Leviticus was believed to be older than Deuteronomy, the identification of priests and Levites in the latter book was supposed to indicate a gradual elevation of the status of the Levite ; according to the nearer view, which regards Deuteronomy as the earlier book, the pre-eminence of the sons of Aaron in Leviticus denotes the gradual growth of a hierarchical tendency and the elevation of a distinctly priestly family. The view rests mainly on an intricate and very precarious interpretation of a passage in Ezekiel (chap. xliv.), upon which we cannot here enter.

counted for by the one controlling purpose, to secure that Israel should be kept clear of heathen contamination and be prepared for the duties of a settled life in the land of their inheritance. And, finally, as the preservation of the unity of religion would depend much on the uniform observance of its great ceremonies, the necessity of a central sanctuary, which had been met by the existence of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, is insisted on with an emphasis which forms a leading characteristic of the book.

5. *Relation to other books of the Pentateuch.*—The considerations that have just been put forward explain to a great extent why it is that the Book of Deuteronomy, as a whole, is in its literary aspects so different from the other books of the Pentateuch. It remains to be added that a close examination of the book shows that it was not intended to be a work complete in itself, and that it is not intelligible apart from those that precede it. Not merely does it, by its introduction and conclusion, fit into the historical outline of the whole Pentateuch; but there are, in the body of the book itself, features both of the narrative and of the legislation which rest upon the history and legislation that precede it.

For example, we find in chapter xxiv. 8, “Take heed in the plague of leprosy that thou observe diligently to do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you; as I commanded them, so shall ye observe to do.” As the prescriptions referred to, which necessarily would be of an intricate description, are not found in Deuteronomy itself, we are bound to assume that the reference is to such detailed laws as are laid down in Leviticus xiii., xiv. In the same way, in Deuteronomy xviii. 2, it is said of the tribe of Levi, “They shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the Lord is their inheritance, as He hath said unto them,” where the reference must be to such passages as Numbers xviii. 20, 23.

Even more striking are the incidental allusions. The making of the ark is only alluded to in a brief phrase (x. 1), and the first mention of the Tabernacle of the congregation—and it is merely a mention—occurs in xxxi. 14. Such allusions do more than vouch for the mere existence of the ark and the Tabernacle: they rest upon, and are unintelligible apart from, a ritual and worship of which these were prominent features. So again, when it is said (xxiv. 9), “Remember what the Lord thy God did unto Miriam, by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt,” the whole story of Miriam’s leprosy, as told in Numbers xii., is suggested; and indeed the manner in which the events of the Exodus and the wilderness journeyings are touched upon throughout

the book, implies that the whole narrative of the preceding books is well known.

6. *Critical Views.*—Nevertheless, the newer school of criticism holds it as proved that the legislation of Deuteronomy is earlier than that of Leviticus, and that the book itself was “composed in the same age as that in which it was discovered, and that it was made the rule of Josiah’s reformation, which took place about a generation before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans” (2 Kings xxii.).* It is maintained that the only authoritative code of law up to this time was the brief Book of the Covenant (Exodus xx. 23—xxiii.), that the Deuteronomic code was drawn up and ascribed to Moses, in the interest of the centralisation of worship, and did actually bring about the reform of that king’s reign. But, however positively it may be asserted, there is absolutely no proof that the Book of Deuteronomy *alone* is referred to as “the Book of the Law,” or “Book of the Covenant” (2 Kings xxii. 8 ; xxiii. 2), that was found in the Temple.

Suppose for a moment that we admit that this book was written for the purpose of authorising a central sanctuary, the question arises, What was the use of authorising a sanctuary whose ritual and service are not prescribed? It is impossible from the Book of Deuteronomy, still less possible from the Book of the Covenant, to construct a manual of laws for the Temple service; and yet the Temple service could not have been maintained up to the time of Josiah without an orderly and detailed ritual. If the existing ritual was accepted as authoritative, then there was some law, such as that of Leviticus, written or unwritten, to sanction it: if it was the mere growth of usage, it is incredible that Mosaic sanction should not have been sought for it as well as for central worship: and if, as is certain, the ritual had been overlaid with corruptions, there was the more reason why its pure forms should be laid down. We are thus driven, by every consideration, to assume that *some* Levitical code was accepted as authoritative, and no other is known to have existed than the code of Leviticus. But, had the main purpose of the book been to give authority to a central sanctuary, what stronger motive could have been urged than the presence of the ark in the Temple, not to speak of the Tabernacle in the wilderness? Yet this argument is not employed, although as we have seen the writer knew of both the ark and the Tabernacle.

For the late date of the book much reliance is placed on the Law of the Kingdom (xvii. 14—20), which it is maintained could

* See Introduction to the Pentateuch, § 10, pp. 11, 12.

only have been framed after Solomon and other kings had given examples of the luxury therein animadverted upon. But, apart from all prophetic foresight, which the most modern critics refuse to admit, it was surely the most natural thing for Moses, acquainted with the kingly government as it prevailed among all surrounding nations but his own, to foresee and provide for the eventuality supposed. If the abuses against which he uttered his warning were exactly those which occurred, they had already been seen in other nations, and were exactly those that might have been expected : and it is remarkable that one danger mentioned, from which other nations had suffered, that of being ruled over by a king of foreign blood, never emerged, so far as we are aware, in the actual history of Israel.

Again, if the book was composed at a late date and mainly under prophetic influence, it is very remarkable that the prophetic order should be referred to in so vague a manner as it seems to be in xviii. 15—22, and still more so that there is nowhere to be found a hint of the antagonism between the prophetic and priestly classes, of which the critics make so much, and which had certainly shown itself long before the time of Josiah. And yet, according to the critical view, the reformation of Josiah's time was one that was very disadvantageous to the priestly class. That Hilkiah the high priest co-operated in the reform is a good proof that he regarded the "Book of the Law" as having a higher authority than that of the prophetic order ; and the entire harmony of priestly and prophetic tendencies in this book indicates an early time when the harmony was unbroken.

7. *Retrospect.*—On looking back from the point at which the Pentateuch closes, we can see that not one of the five books of which it is composed is complete in itself and devoid of reference to the others. The story is taken up by one where it is dropped by the preceding ; and the legislation also, however fragmentary in the way in which it is presented, shows a connection and a progress. It may be admitted that the component parts of the books belong to different periods, the death of Moses, for example, being recorded side by side with words spoken and written by Moses. It may be admitted that we have three stages of legislation, as represented in the Book of the Covenant, the Levitical code, and Deuteronomy ; it may be admitted that there are variations in the laws and an advance from a lower to a higher stage ; but all this does not necessitate the assumption that these codes are separated by intervals of centuries. From the time when the short code of the Covenant was given at Sinai till the time when Israel was ready to cross the Jordan,

many changes, internal and external, had taken place.* Laws suited to the desert would be unsuited to settled life, and laws given in prospect of the life in Canaan might from various causes fall into disuse or be held in abeyance. The modification in the age of Levitical service found in the compass of one book† shows how regulations of this kind are subject to change. It is always so with matters of ritual; and it is quite possible that Levitical laws, under the special custody of the priests, might be retouched from time to time as usage varied, and yet be essentially Mosaic.

All this and much more may be admitted; but all who would give the Biblical writers credit for ordinary honesty will hesitate before admitting that we owe a great part of the Pentateuch to literary fiction. When it is gravely asserted that prophets and the best spirits of the nation framed first one code, and then another, with the deliberate intention to represent the history of the past as something different from what it actually was, when the co-called historical books are said to have been written to support an unhistorical view, and when even the writings of contemporary prophets have to be expurgated before they can be used as evidence, one may despair of arriving at the truth altogether, or at once set about constructing the history without the aid of these books. And when we remember, on the one hand, that such prophets as Jeremiah, who is believed to have had an active share in the production of Deuteronomy, were in the habit of enforcing their words by no authority of Moses, but by a peremptory "Thus saith the Lord"; and on the other hand, that very little is left, on this theory, of Mosaic work to appeal to, it appears more and more evident that the only use of the hypothesis of literary fiction is to afford critics a way of escape from an untenable position.

* Wellhausen has to assume that in fifty years of the Exile a people who had been hopelessly wedded to the worship of the high places was effectually and for ever cured of this tendency. If so much could happen in those fifty years, why should the forty years between Egypt and Canaan be a fixed point?

† Numbers iv. 3, viii. 24. Compare also 1 Chron. xxiii. 3, 27; 2 Chron. xxxi. 17.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

1. *Its Place in the Canon.*—The books which now bear the names of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings are in the Hebrew Bible classed together under the general name of the *Former Prophets*. They are called *prophets*, not because they are regarded as prophetic books in the usual sense, but because they were believed to have been composed by prophetic men, and the qualification *former* refers simply to the fact that they precede, in the order of the canon, the prophetic writings, strictly so called, which are named the *Latter Prophets*.

The names of the individual parts of this series, it will at once be apparent, indicate the subjects, not the authors, of the compositions, and the division of the whole into separate books has varied, as will be explained when we reach the Books of Samuel and Kings. These books are all of anonymous authorship, and we are left to determine, as far as possible, by a critical examination of the compositions themselves, out of what materials they were composed, and how and at what period they attained their present forms. This circumstance, however, so far from detracting from the credibility of the books, in reality enhances their value in this respect. The writing down of such historical records as these books contain must have been the work, not of private individuals, but of persons possessing the acquirement, rare in early times, of letters, and occupying some official standing among their people; and the more ancient these writers, the more prominent would be their position.

It is expressly stated that Moses wrote down such accounts of events of his time, and wrote them in an authoritative manner for national preservation.* The same thing is said of Joshua;† and it is natural to suppose that those who continued their literary work would be men of recognised standing. Writings

* See Introduction to the Pentateuch, § 5, pp. 5, 6.

† Joshua xxiv. 26.

put forth by such men, relating the history of a people whose national consciousness was so strong, must have had a kind of official recognition, and are thus vouched for, so to speak, not merely by an individual author, but by the whole nation. Like the Gospel narratives in the early Church, they set forth "the things most surely believed among" the people of Israel, and so they were handed on without question, accepted as in the highest sense the national literature, and included, as a matter of course, in the canon of sacred books.

2. *Name and Divisions.*—The Book of Joshua is so named from the personage who figures most prominently in its pages. Joshua, the son of Nun, had been the servant and intimate companion of Moses in the desert, and had, towards the close of Moses' life (Deut. xxxi.), been solemnly set apart as his successor. The work to which he was specially called was the leadership of the armed host in the conquest of the promised land, for which he had early shown a special fitness by his aptitude for military affairs (Exod. xvii. 8—16). But, in general, he had to carry on the work of Moses, to be, as the lawgiver himself expressed it, "a man over the congregation, who may go out before them, and who may go in before them, and who may lead them out, and may bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd" (Num. xxvii. 16, 17). The book which shows how this was accomplished appropriately bears his name; and, as the books called the books of Moses ends with the death of the lawgiver, the Book of Joshua ends with the death of the military leader.

It falls naturally into three parts; the first, embracing chapters i. to xii., narrating the conquest of Canaan; the second, extending from chapters xiii. to xxiii., describing the partition of the land among the several tribes; while the third (xxiii., xxiv.) forms a conclusion to the whole, and is mainly of a hortatory character. The principal events of the conquest which are here related are these. Joshua, encouraged by a special revelation, orders the tribes to prepare for the crossing of the Jordan (chap. i.), and sends two spies, who find a lodging in Rahab's house and return with a hopeful report (ii.). The people march from Shittim, where they had been encamped (Num. xxv. 1), to the banks of the Jordan, and after three days make the miraculous passage of the river (iii., iv.); after which they celebrate their entrance into Canaan by the performance of the rite of circumcision and the observance of the Passover (v. 1—12). The walled city of Jericho is taken (v. 13—vi. 27), Ai is attacked, and, after the detection and punishment of Achan's sin, is taken (vii.—viii. 29). The covenant is confirmed at Ebal and Gerizim

(viii. 30—35). The Gibeonites by craft procure a treaty of peace with Israel (ix.); and the league of the Southern Kings is broken by the great battle of Beth-horon (x.). With the defeat of a similar confederacy of forces in the north in a battle near the waters of Merom (xi.), the conquest of the whole country is practically secured, a list of the conquered kings being given in chapter xii.

In the second part of the book, after a general statement of the boundaries of the land to be divided (xiii. 1—7), and an indication of the limits of the territory which had already been allotted to the two tribes and a-half on the east of Jordan (xiii. 8—33), Joshua and Eleazar, having first assigned Hebron to Caleb (xiv. 6—15), proceed to divide the western territory, giving portions, first of all, to Judah, Ephraim, and half of Manasseh (xv.—xvii.), and then, after the setting up of the Tabernacle at Shiloh, to the remaining tribes except Levi (xviii.—xix. 48), a special inheritance being set apart to Joshua himself (xix. 49—51). The cities of refuge and the Levitical cities are designated (xx.—xxi.), and the two tribes and a-half are sent home to their own territory with an injunction to maintain faithfully the national religion (xxii.).

In the concluding part of the book Joshua solemnly addresses the people, warning them against the idolatry of the neighbouring nations, calls them to Shechem, where the bones of Joseph had been laid, and there renews the covenant, incorporating a record of the transactions in the Book of the Law, and setting up a commemorative stone under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord (xxiii., xxiv. 28). The book closes with a brief account of the death and burial of Joshua and of Eleazar (xxiv. 29—33).

3. *Literary Features.*—In style as well as in contents the different parts of the book have their individual peculiarities. The first part is historical, both in form and substance; the second, while historical in style, is in contents chiefly topographical. It may be said to be also legislative, for the partition of territory is carried out in an official manner, Joshua, the successor of Moses, and Eleazar, the successor of Aaron, representing the prophetic and priestly authority, and the sacred lot giving Divine sanction to their proceedings. The concluding portion is in the hortatory style of Deuteronomy.

Certain variations in language also have been observed in these different portions. The original word for "tribe" employed in the chapters relating to the conquest is different from that used in those relating to the partition of the land. In the earlier part, and also in the concluding section, the officials associated

with Joshua are usually designated *elders*, *heads*, or *officers*,* whereas, in the middle part, they are styled *heads of the fathers*.† Now, it has been observed that these peculiarities correspond with usages found in the Pentateuch. In portions which are known as Jehovistic (e.g. Exod. v. 14, 15, 19; Num. xi. 16), as also in Deuteronomy, the “officers” are frequently mentioned, and “elders” occur less frequently than in the Elohistic sections, in which “the heads of the fathers” are also characteristic (Exod. vi. 14, 25; Num. vii. 2, xxxii. 28, xxxvi. 1). Again, Eleazar, who in the second portion of this book is associated with Joshua in the partition of the land, is not mentioned at all in the earlier portion, not even where the priests appear, and it is maintained that all the places in the Pentateuch where he is mentioned are Elohistic.

For such reasons modern critics have concluded that the Book of Joshua is of the same composite character as the Pentateuch, and assume that, in its original form, it was closely joined to the preceding work, the whole forming a connected history ending with the conquest: and so they are in the habit of speaking of the *Hexateuch*, or book of six portions, as distinguished from the present Pentateuch.‡ The Book of Joshua, however, in its present form, has features that show that it was intended to be complete in itself; and the fact that the Samaritans have substantially the Pentateuch as it exists in the Hebrew, but a work widely divergent from the Book of Joshua, is proof that, if the two were once connected, the separation must have taken place before they assumed their present form. The references to the “Book of the Law of Moses” (i. 8, viii. 34, 35, xxiv. 26) presupposes the existence in a formal and independent shape of something corresponding to the legislative part of the Pentateuch. The ending of the book with the death of Joshua and Eleazar, just as the Pentateuch ends with the death of Moses, shows that the writer wished to make his work a completed composition. Certain peculiarities also in the spelling of proper names betray a different hand from that employed on the Pentateuch; and the division of the eastern territory and the designation of the cities of refuge, which form part of the subject of the Pentateuch, are here treated at length anew, as if the author wished to give completeness and independence to his work.

* See i. 10, iii. 2, vii. 6, viii. 10, 33, xxiii. 2, xxiv. 1, in some of which it will be observed *judges* also occur. In ix. 15, 18, 19, 21, we have “*princes* (or chiefs) of the congregation.”

† See xiv. 1, xix. 51, xxi. 1, xxii. 14, 21, 30, and note the variation, “heads of the thousands.” In xvii. 4 we have also “*princes*.”

‡ See Introduction to the Pentateuch, §§ 1, 8, 9, pp. 1, 9, 10.

4. *Period covered by the Book.*—The book contains but a brief and summary account of the events which happened during the period to which it relates. The duration of Joshua's rule has been variously estimated; probably it may be stated as lasting about twenty-five years. It is said towards the close of the account of the conquest (xi. 18) that "Joshua made war a long time with all those kings;" and when Caleb, at the partition of territory, claimed a special inheritance, he said it was five and forty years since Moses had made such a promise to him (xiv. 10), referring to the time when the spies returned to Kadesh, before the beginning of the wandering of thirty-eight years. Thus seven years at least are to be assigned to the conquest; and when Joshua summons the people together at the close of the book (xxiii. 1) he is "an old man, well stricken in years," and "many days" have passed since "the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about." Yet the events which must have filled up this long time are only stated in a summary manner.

We have, in the history of the conquest, only the details of a few great battles which were decisive of the contest; we have also indications of the boundaries of the tribes and lists of the towns lying within them; but as to the manner in which the people as a whole settled down in the new circumstances in which they were placed, and the extent to which they took actual possession of the land assigned to them, we have only the most general hints. In a war of occupation in a country like Palestine the foe is not finally broken in a few encounters. Though the invaders secure a footing, the original inhabitants only retire to advance again, or keep up a desultory warfare "for a long time," molesting the invaders, or taking advantage of their movements to regain lost ground. Thus places that fell at the first shock are found raising their heads again when the clash of arms is past, and towns are taken and retaken before the struggle is conclusively decided. Hebron and Debir, for example, are mentioned as taken by Joshua in the southern campaign (x. 36—39, xi. 21), yet require to be subdued by Caleb (xiv. 12—14, xv. 13—19); and Gezer, smitten by Joshua (x. 33, xii. 12), had to be cleared by the children of Joseph (xvi. 10).

It is most remarkable that we have no account at all of the conquest of the largest part of the country, the great backbone of the land falling principally to the lot of Ephraim. While there is a great battle fought in the south, and a similar decisive battle in the north, the intervening territory is not mentioned, except briefly in one verse (xi. 16), although it must have been firmly taken possession of, and that after no little effort, as the

remarkable passage xvii. 14—18 shows. Moreover, in the list of conquered kings given in xii. 9—24, while there is a full enumeration of places in the south and north that had been subdued, there is an almost total absence of names of places falling within the great central district. The account given in viii. 30—35 of the confirming of the covenant at Shechem seems strangely out of place immediately after the capture of Ai, and before any word has been said of the subjugation of the territory in which Shechem lay. If it is not placed where it stands by anticipation, this may imply other military operations in the heart of the country of which we have no record. At all events, the striking omission of details regarding this territory, to whatever cause it is due, emphasises the fact that a great deal must have happened during these years which can only be inferred from the brief accounts given in the book, and reminds us that the conquest and occupation of Canaan must have been a slower and more arduous work than a cursory reading might lead us to suppose.

5. *The Conquest.*—The purpose of the book being evidently to give an account of the manner in which Canaan was subdued, and its territory apportioned among the tribes, the details, though few, are so presented as to show the wisdom with which both were effected. We can see the advantage of the Israelites not having been allowed to enter the land from the south, where height after height would have had to be taken, and a stronger resistance encountered at every step. Entering from the east, and securing a firm base at Gilgal by the destruction of the neighbouring strong town of Jericho, they were able to penetrate the country by the pass leading up to Ai, to strike right and left in the very heart of the country, and, after the great battle, to pursue the fleeing foe down the pass of Beth-horon. These two passes, opening up from the east and west on the mountainous inland ridge, enabled them to keep up communication with their base at Gilgal, and to carry out the subjugation of the southern part of the country. That this was effectually done we gather from the brief summary of chapter x. 40—43, where the Revised Version gives a more precise rendering of the fortieth verse:—“So Joshua smote all the land, the hill country and the south [the Negeb], and the lowland [the Shephelah], and the slopes and all their kings.” And it was probably so far concluded before the great battle in the north was fought; for it was the rumour of Joshua’s victories that roused Jabin and his confederates to combine to oppose him, and though Joshua’s movement against them was sudden he must have felt secure from the southern side before venturing so far north.

Again, the chapters which describe the territories of the tribes

are, from an antiquarian and topographical point of view, exceedingly interesting, and have been called by Dean Stanley the *Domesday Book* of the conquest of Canaan. The boundaries seem to have been drawn with the greatest care, and in the case of seven tribes at least it is expressly said that this was done after an actual survey and from written notes (xviii. 4—9). Recent examinations by the officers of the Palestine Exploration Fund have shown that the boundaries of the various tribes were “almost entirely natural—rivers, ravines, ridges, and the watershed lines of the country.” They have also discovered that the names of towns situated in the various tribes are not put down at haphazard, but “follow an order roughly consecutive, and all those of one district are mentioned together.” This fact, indeed, has enabled the explorers in some cases to effect their identifications.

It is also pointed out that the territories of individual tribes in many cases constitute distinct districts of the country. “Issachar had the great plain, Zebulon the low hills north of it. The sons of Joseph held the wild central mountains, and Naphtali those of Upper Galilee. Dan and Asher occupied the rich Shephelah (or lowland) and maritime plain. Simeon inhabited the desert, while Judah, holding the largest share of territory, had both mountain and Shephelah, plain and desert in its portion.” And, once more, “the proportion of territory to population is calculated to vary exactly in accordance with the fertility of the district. Taking as a basis the tribe populations (Num. xxvi.), it appears that the ancient populations must have been most dense exactly in those districts in which the greatest number of ancient ruins is now found, and which are still most thickly inhabited.”*

6. *Plan and connection with other books.*—All these things, however, are set down by the sacred writer, not for the purpose of satisfying antiquarian curiosity, but, in accordance with the plan underlying all these books, to show that the promise of God to the fathers of Israel had been fulfilled. At the close of the record of the conquest it is said: “So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses” (xi. 23); and after the last division of territory the same thought finds expression at greater length: “The Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that He sware unto their fathers. . . . There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to Israel; all came to pass” (xxi. 43—45). In this

* “Twenty-one Years’ Work in the Holy Land,” page 110. Palestine Exploration Fund, 1886.

way the book of Joshua connects itself in plan and contents with the antecedent Pentateuch.

We shall also see that it is connected on the other side with the succeeding Book of Judges, and thus forms a link in the chain of history which it is the object of the sacred writers to unfold. In one aspect it may be regarded as the conclusion of one stage of history, for it represents the fulfilment of the promise; in another aspect it is the beginning of a new period, for Israel now passes into settled life, and has new problems to solve, new difficulties to face. But, from whatever side the sacred writers view the history, they assume that Israel has a special calling, and is under a special Divine protection and guidance. And, indeed, it is impossible to account for their conquest of Canaan without assuming the help of God and their conviction of His help. The Canaanites were far their superiors in the civilisation of the time; and, although their vices had enervated them and their divisions made them an easier prey to the invaders, they were still able to offer a stout resistance and to continue to give trouble to their vanquishers.

The idea of some writers of recent times that the various tribes passed over from the east of the Jordan into Canaan at different times and secured possession by their independent efforts, or even peaceably by purchase or alliance with the native races, is clearly not the idea of the sacred writers, and is entirely inadequate to explain either the accounts or the events. There can be no question that it was one of the earliest and most deeply rooted beliefs of the Israelites that they had obtained possession of Canaan in an extraordinary way and by the special help of their God; it is equally clear that they obtained such a decided mastery over the native races that the language and laws and religion of the conquerors took the place of those of the conquered.

But to assume that such a belief, which was the mainspring of all the national greatness of Israel, rested on nothing more than the wanderings of tribes into Canaan and gradual inter-mixture and incorporation with the inhabitants, and that such a mastery was gained by a race that not only borrowed the culture but even adopted the religious usages of the people among whom they settled, is to accept miracles greater than those which it is proposed to set aside. To whatever depths Israel afterwards fell, it is clear that, in order to gain possession of Canaan, they must have had to fight hard, and that till their supremacy was secured they must have remained united in national life and in religion or they would have been absorbed. Only the consciousness of a high destiny, and the conviction that

they were one united people under Divine guidance, such as this book ascribes to them, could have given them courage to achieve what they did; and nothing less than the memory of great events can explain the early national belief of a history such as is here recorded.

7. *Parallels in History*.—The conquest of Canaan by the Israelites has its parallels to some extent in general history. The barbarous Germanic tribes broke down the superior culture of the Roman Empire, and the rude Mohammedans of the desert overran the empires of the East. It is the law of God's providence that luxury brings decay, and that nations whose moral life is corrupted deteriorate in physical courage and political strength. Regarded from this point of view the victory of the Israelites was inevitable. Trained in the scanty life of the desert, debarred from returning to Egypt, and pressed forward by their growing needs, they penetrated the fertile land of Canaan and supplanted the effete civilisation of its inhabitants with their own more healthy life. That in the process of subjugation there were severe struggles and much blood shed is no more than has happened in the similar cases alluded to; and it is captious to object to things occurring in sacred history which are matters of course in the general history of the world.

There are, however, certain things which distinguish the wars of Israel from other wars of conquest: they were fighting for a land which was hallowed by the sepulchres of their fathers, and had been given them by Divine promise; the consciousness that they were engaged in a holy war saved them from the brutalising effects of bloodshed and the debasing effects of plunder; above all, they were the bearers of a religion which was to be a blessing to all the earth, and their occupation of Canaan was necessary in the fulfilment of their destiny till "the fulness of the time" should come. "The Israelites' sword," says Dr. Arnold, "in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth to the very end of the world. In these contests, on the fate of one of these nations of Palestine the happiness of the human race depended. The Israelites fought not for themselves only, but for us. It might follow that they should thus be accounted the enemies of all mankind; it might be that they were tempted by their very distinctness to despise other nations. Still they did God's work; still they preserved unhurt the seed of eternal life, and were the ministers of blessing to all other nations, even though they themselves failed to enjoy it."

THE BOOKS OF JUDGES AND RUTH.

1. *The Names.*—The Book of Judges is so named from the series of distinguished leaders who appeared in Israel from time to time between Joshua and Samuel, and whose deeds form the principal subject of the book. The name given to these leaders is not to be taken to imply that the primary office of the judges was the exercise of judicial functions. The word “judge” in the Old Testament has the usual sense (as may be seen in Psalm xlivi. 1, compared with Exod. ii. 14) of maintaining the cause, or asserting the right, of any one; and the history shows that the judges were raised up, when Israel was in straits, to maintain the cause of God’s people against hostile nations, and to assert the principles on which the Hebrew nation was founded. Hence they are called *saviours* (chap. iii. 9; compare ii. 16).

Judicial functions are not, however, excluded; for, in a state of society such as that depicted in this book, the leader who comes to the front in a time of public necessity is invested with wide powers, and held in general regard. And thus, when Moses and Joshua, who had held office for life, had passed away, and a permanent head like a king had not yet been appointed, the military leader for the time would naturally wield also an authority in civil matters. What is particularly mentioned of Deborah (iv. 5), that “the children of Israel came up to her for judgment,” was doubtless true of others; and Samuel, who may be taken as the last of the line, representing the transition to the monarchical rule, not only himself exercised such functions, but appointed his sons also as judges (1 Sam. viii. 1). The office was not hereditary, the judge being raised up at the time and in the place of special need: it was thus in keeping with the condition of the period, which was one of transition from the rule of Moses and Joshua, who governed by direct instructions from

God, to that of the kings, who had a settled organization for civil and military affairs. The book also, in its literary form, reflects this character of transition, consisting, for the most part, not of a continuous narration, but of a series of sketches or pictures, strikingly different in their details, of the life of the time, and of the deeds of the leaders who, under Divine guidance, influenced the course of events through which Israel settled down to permanent occupation of the promised land.

The little Book of Ruth, so named from the principal personage whose fortunes it relates, though an independent composition, and doubtless written at a different time, connects itself in its subject with the Book of Judges; for the events it records are stated to have occurred "in the days when the judges judged" (Ruth i. 1). Accordingly, it stands in the ancient versions, as in our English Bible, between the Books of Judges and Samuel, although in the Hebrew Bible it has a different place. Some have even supposed that it once formed part of the Book of Judges.

2. *Contents.*—In the series of historical books of the Old Testament the Book of Judges forms an orderly and connected link, following up the story of the conquest contained in the Book of Joshua, and preparing for the opening of the Books of Samuel which exhibit the rise of the kingly power. It falls naturally into three divisions: an introductory portion extending to chap. iii. 6; the main body of the book, embracing chaps. iii. 7, to xvi.; and an appendix in chaps. xvii.—xxi.

The introductory portion is twofold, retrospective and prospective. In chap. i. 1 to ii. 5, there is a condensed description of the extent to which the land had been, "after the death of Joshua," subdued by Israel. It mentions particularly the cities and districts which were left in the hands of the Canaanites, and concludes with a special revelation, threatening Israel with heavy trials if they did not take energetic measures for the possession of their territory. Then, in ii. 6—iii. 6, is given, prospectively, a summary view of the whole period of the judges which is to be described in the succeeding chapters.

After this introductory matter comes the main part of the book (iii. 7—xvi. 31). There are, in all, twelve persons mentioned who performed the function of judge, reckoning Deborah and Barak as one, and excluding Abimelech, who is regarded as a usurper. Of six of these the exploits are related at varying lengths; of the other six we have little more than a bare mention. The six who are treated in detail are: Othniel, son of Kenaz, who delivered Israel from the oppression of Cushan-Rishathayim, of Mesopotamia (iii. 7—11); Ehud, the Benjamite,

who appeared during the subjugation of Israel by Moab, with Ammon and Amalek, and achieved deliverance by slaying the Moabite king, Eglon (iii. 12—30); Deborah of Ephraim and Barak of Naphtali, who defeated Sisera, the general of Jabin, king of the Canaanites, at the battle of Tabor (iv., v.); Gideon of Manasseh, who repelled the invasion of the Midianites and “the Children of the East” (vi. 1—viii. 32), but by his imprudent assumption of a show of permanent authority gave occasion to the ambition of his son Abimelech, whose upstart reign is the subject of viii. 33—ix. 57; Jephthah of Gilead, who was called by his countrymen to act as leader against the Ammonites (x. 6—xii. 7); and Samson, the Danite, who “began to deliver” Israel from the oppression of the Philistines (xiii.—xvi.). The six who are but briefly mentioned are: Shamgar, who performed an exploit against the Philistines (iii. 31), Tola of Issachar (x. 1, 2), Jair of Gilead (x. 3—5), Ibzan of Bethlehem (xii. 8—10), Elon of Zebulon (xii. 11, 12), and Abdon of Pirathon (xii. 13—15), in regard to whom we are told only the period over which their rule extended, and some details as to their families and social position.

The appendix contains two episodes belonging to the time of the judges, viz., the story of the image-worship of Micah the Ephraimite, in its connection with the settling of the Danites in the north of the land (xvii.—xviii.); and the account of the outrage committed at Gibeah, which led to the war of extermination waged against Benjamin by the other tribes (xix.—xxi.).

The Book of Ruth, so far as the subject is concerned, may be regarded as another appendix, relating the episode of the young Moabitish widow, who became a mother in Israel and an ancestress of the royal house of David. Though the duration of the various oppressions and the time of the rule of the judges, and of the “rest” which the land enjoyed after each deliverance, are carefully given in most instances, it is impossible from these numbers to construct a system of chronology for the period of the Judges which would harmonize with other fixed dates in the history. From the frequent recurrence of the number forty, it would seem probable that the whole period of four hundred and eighty years, which, according to 1 Kings vi. 1, elapsed between the Exodus and the commencement of the building of the Temple, was divided by the Biblical writers into twelve round periods of forty years. But, seeing that a simple addition of the numbers mentioned in this Book of Judges would make the period far too extensive, it is most probable that there was an overlapping of several of the periods mentioned; and the probability is all the stronger when we regard the fact that the judges appeared in

places remote from one another in connection with oppressions that were more or less limited in their range.

3. *Characteristics.*—The several divisions of the Book of Judges which have just been enumerated have their different characteristics. The second portion of the introduction attaches itself closely to the main part of the book which immediately follows it. The conception of both is that, during the period of the Judges, the history of Israel repeats itself in ever recurring cycles. This conception is clearly enunciated in the preface (ii. 11—18) as the principle on which the succeeding history is to be treated, and finds expression in certain stereotyped phrases which occur at intervals throughout the book: “The children of Israel again did evil in the eyes of the Lord;” . . . “The Lord sold them into the hand of” the oppressor for the time, whom “they served” for so many years; . . . “The Lord raised up a deliverer” in the person of the judge whose deeds are then recorded . . . this deliverer judged Israel so long, and finally, “the land had rest” for a certain round number of years. This portion is apparently designed to be the sequel to the book of Joshua, for the introduction takes up the narrative at the point where it had been dropped in that book, and repeats the very words with which it closes.* It is thus written to give an account of the condition of Israel in the period when Joshua and all his contemporaries had passed away; and, coming down as it does to the oppression by the Philistines in the time of Samson, it carries us into the period taken up in the First Book of Samuel, at the opening of which the Philistines are seen holding a firm grasp of Israel in the south.†

The former part of the introduction, on the other hand, connects itself most naturally with the first part of the Book of Joshua, giving a picture of the state of the country immediately after the war of conquest, or, at all events, soon after Joshua’s death. Here also we find the very words of the preceding book repeated in reference to the subjugation of certain places,‡ the object being evidently to show how imperfectly Israel had fulfilled its duty, as is seen more distinctly in the threatening uttered by the angel of the Lord, with which this part of the introduction closes (ii. 1—5).

The appended narratives, again, at the close of the book (xvii. —xxi.) connect themselves in time with this part of the introduction, falling, as they do, shortly after the time of Joshua, when the grandsons of Moses and Aaron were still alive. In

* Compare Judges ii. 6—10, with Josh. xxiv. 28—31.

† Compare Judges xiii. 1, 5, with 1 Sam. vii. 13.

‡ Compare, for example, Judges i. 11—15, with Josh. xv. 15—19.

chap. xviii. 30, in reference to the idol-worship set up at Dan, it is said that "Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses,* he and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land;" and in chap. xx. 27, 28, we read that Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was alive and ministering before the ark at the time of the war with Benjamin.

The time to which the Book of Ruth relates is indicated in the genealogy at the close (Ruth iii. 18—22), which shows that Boaz, the husband of Ruth, was the grandfather of Jesse, the father of David.

4. *Composition.*—These different materials have the appearance of having come from different hands, but we have only the most general indications of the sources from which they are derived, and the periods at which they were composed. From the recurring statement in the closing chapters (xvii. 6; xviii. 1; xix. 1; xxi. 25), "In those days there was no king in Israel," we may gather that these portions, and the related introduction, which regards the period of the Judges as a completed whole, were written in the time of the monarchy, by one who wished to magnify the kingly office, or, at least, that they come from a writer who wished to show the superiority of the regal period over a time when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The Book of Ruth also, which begins by referring to "the days when the judges ruled" (Ruth i. 1) and ends by showing the genealogy of David (Ruth iv. 22), evidently belongs to a time when the Davidic line was established on the throne.

There is some doubt as to the reference of the words, "until the day of the captivity of the land," in chapter xviii. 30. Some suppose that the time implied is the same as that mentioned in the succeeding verse, viz., "all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh," and an ancient manuscript actually reads "until the day of the captivity of the ark." If the reference is to the overthrow of the northern kingdom, it would follow that the latest hand traceable in the book belongs to the time of the Captivity, but it is quite likely that the expression "captivity" was applied to other national calamities, although, as it is said in the Talmud, "a greater captivity causes a former one to be forgotten." At all events, there can be no doubt that the Book of Judges contains elements of a much earlier date. The song of Deborah (chap. v.) has all the freshness and fire of a contemporaneous production, and is regarded on all hands as belonging to the time whose stirring events it relates.

* So the Revised Version now reads. The name Moses is believed to have been purposely changed to Manasseh by pious scribes, out of respect to the memory of the Lawgiver.

As to the accounts of the deeds of the various judges, it has been supposed by some that they were collected from oral tradition and from different quarters, the tribe or family to which the respective leader belonged having, in the form of popular story, preserved the memory of its hero's exploits. The recitals are, at all events, of a popular cast. The fragments of poetry, parables and proverbs, references to common customs, and the graphic manner in which the various characters are depicted and their actions described—the deed itself being more prominent than its moral character—are all characteristic of such a kind of early national literature. There is, however, no ground for the supposition that each of the tribes contributed a picture to the national collection; for, though there are twelve judges in all, they are not distributed over the twelve tribes.

From whatever source the accounts were derived they have been put together on a fixed plan, and made to illustrate one guiding principle, as has already been said. It may be added that the simplicity of the style, the minute accuracy of topographical detail, the variety of incident, and, above all, the absence of any attempt to conceal or palliate the failings of the characters described, all combine to give the impression that we have before us, not fabulous or mythical tales, but true narratives of rough but brave deeds, such as might be looked for in a transitional state of society, when men had hard problems to solve, and often solved them in a rough and ready manner.

5. *Situation.*—The situation of Israel in the period covered by these books is a very peculiar one. Deprived of the leadership of Moses and Joshua, the tribes are left as a rule to their individual self-government, and, scattered to their various territories, they are exposed to various dangers and have their various vicissitudes. The Book of Joshua had partly prepared us for the spectacle which is here presented, and these books supply to a great extent what is lacking there of information as to the manner in which a permanent settlement was effected in Canaan.*

The problem before the people is to take firm possession of the land as their home. They are not reinforced by fresh arrivals of kindred tribes, as other invaders have been; they do not seek to conquer Palestine as a province, and hold it by armed force, as great empires have added to their dominions; neither are they allowed to amalgamate with the native races and make a mixed stock, as has generally been the rule in the occupation of a land by a conquering race. But these very circumstances

* See Joshua, § 4, p. 62.

render their task all the more difficult; and the Book of Judges shows us the two great dangers to which the situation chiefly exposed them.

In the first place, it shows that they suffered more from the seductions of peace than from the hardships of war. So long as they were an armed host, they were true to their calling and invincible. But the time taken to subdue the land was, after all, comparatively short, and many of the native races were left in the midst of Israel, as the book shows. Thus, the first sharp struggle of the conquest over, when the native races of the land had given up the contest, or contented themselves with holding a few positions of advantage, the original warlike ardour of the conquerors abates, and they begin to taste the sweets of peace in a land of fertility and plenty. Dependent to a great extent for local information on the natives around them, and taking advantage of their labour or observing their modes of agriculture, they would come to mingle with them in the ordinary occupations of life. From children like themselves, from bondmen and bond-women in their homes, the younger generation of Israel would imbibe superstitious notions; and the past history shows too plainly how deeply saturated the minds of the parents already were with such notions. From this point the transition would be easy to the apostasy described in the Book of Judges; the local shrines venerated by the Canaanites would be visited by the Israelites, and the local deities, regarded as givers of plenty, would be acknowledged and reverenced. Thus, becoming like the nations whom they had supplanted, they run the imminent risk of sharing their fate. Moab, Ammon, and Amalek, on the south and east; the Canaanite kingdom of Jabin on the north; the roving Midianites and the children of the east, like the modern Bedawin Arabs, from the desert; and the rising power of the Philistines on the south-west, in turn take advantage of their weakness and reduce them to straits.

In the second place, from the dispersion of the tribes, there was danger of that national unity being broken, on which the success of Israel depended. The old system of local government by elders, and the assignment of definite territories to the individual tribes, while keeping each single tribe from breaking up, would tend to make each its own centre. The provision of a national assembly no doubt existed, and the high-priest was there to deliver the sacred oracle when it was asked; but these provisions, it is observable, come into fuller view only in the time of revived national life under Samuel, and are scarcely noticeable in the Book of Judges.

Between these two dangers, then, Israel is placed during this

period, and the history of the judges is the history of their deliverance from them. Each successive oppression falls upon them when they forget the Lord and serve other gods; the pressure felt at each new point brings home to the tribe concerned its isolation and its inability to cope single-handed with the enemy. In their distress they return unto the Lord, whom in their prosperity they had forgotten; the necessity of combination revives their feeling of national unity; and thus by the very backslidings of the time they are disciplined for a better future. The failures and the successes of the period culminate in the time of Samuel, in whose days the light of Divine revelation, which had fitfully flickered up in the period of the judges, begins to shine steadily in the teaching of the prophets, and the sporadic rule of judges merges in the settled reign of kings.

6. *Relation to other Books.*—The contrast presented by the Book of Judges and those of the Pentateuch and Joshua in the matter of the religious observances and life of Israel is very marked. In the Book of Joshua there were references to the law of Moses, and Joshua and Eleazar are seen acting still with the old authority of Moses and Aaron. Here, on the contrary, there is not one reference to the law, and from the greater part of the book we could scarcely infer that such a law had been given. We hear nothing of the service of the Tabernacle, the ark of the covenant is only incidentally mentioned (xx. 27, 28), and, in general, we are told very little about the religious usages of the people. Not only so, but what we are told reveals a state of matters which we do not naturally expect. For, besides the general statement as to the worship of heathen gods, the conceptions of worship exhibited by Micah and the Danites, the degraded position of the Levites, the conduct of a godly man like Gideon in setting up an ephod in his house at Ophrah, the pictures given of the characters of Jephthah and Samson, and indeed the whole view that we obtain of the religious condition of the time, seem sadly out of keeping with the requirements of the law and with the training and experience which Israel had enjoyed. Hence those who maintain the late date of the Mosaic system point to the Book of Judges in proof of their contention that the religious institutions of Israel grew up by development from a crude stage such as that book represents.

Now, as to the religious practice of Israel, it is not sufficiently borne in mind that the very books of the Pentateuch, which relate to the giving of the law and its acceptance by the people, record gross violations of it from the very commencement, and prepare us for the declension which is witnessed in the time of the Judges. Again, the argument drawn from the silence of this

book as to observances of worship is very misleading. The statements as to the worship of Jehovah and the worship of Baalim and Ashtaroth are given in the same general terms, "They forsook the Lord and served other gods." If we accept the one half of the statement, we must accept the other; and if the worship of the Baalim consisted in formal and definite acts, the worship of Jehovah, which was neglected, must also have had its definite recognised forms. The brief notice therefore implies a recognised religious service quite different from that of the surrounding heathen. It is further to be remembered that none of these books professes to give a complete view of all that occurred in the time to which it relates. Many things happened, many observances must have been in existence, many regulations for civil and religious life must have been in exercise, of which not a word is said.

The little story of Ruth, relating to this same time, had it been the only account of that period that had come down to us, would have led us to believe that the period was one of idyllic peace and fervent piety. So also when the Book of Samuel opens, it discloses to us the Tabernacle at Shiloh, and a regular worship, overlaid with corruptions, but certainly not borrowed from the Canaanites, as generally recognised and observed. Even the corrupt forms in which the religion of the time of the Judges manifests itself, prove the existence of a better worship of which they were perversions. The position in which the Levites are represented is mean enough; but who were these Levites at all, if, according to the view of the advanced critics, the tribe of Levi had entirely disappeared, and the Levitical guild arose at a later time by the gradual elevation of a priestly caste? Finally, the rallying of the tribes to a common standard in time of danger proves the existence of tribal organisation and the consciousness of national unity, such as the accounts of the Pentateuch attest, and is inconsistent with the modern theory of the immigration and independent settlement of various tribes.

A great deal is made of the fact that, in Deborah's song, in the muster-roll of the tribes, no mention is made of Judah, as if this were a proof that at that time the great southern tribe had not yet risen into importance. Whether this omission arose from the fact that Judah was distant from the scene of danger and conflict, or it is an indication that even at this time the southern tribe was assuming that semi-independent position in which it already appears under the first kings, the argument drawn from it is very unsafe. In the summary given in chap. i. of the territory occupied by the tribes, all those in the west of the Jordan are mentioned except Issachar, although in Deborah's song that

tribe bears the brunt of the fighting against Jabin (v. 15); and there are similar striking omissions in other books.*

7. *The Period.*—We cannot, therefore, take the period of the Judges as the starting point of the national history of Israel, nor regard the religious practice of the time as the germ out of which future institutions were slowly developed. At the same time, to ignore the fact that religious life was at a low ebb would be opposed to the plain teaching of the books before us. All the narratives, both of the Pentateuch and of the succeeding books, agree in representing the law as too highly pitched for the people's life, an ideal for them to aim at, a standard to reprove them. In their first ardour at its delivery, they are willing to say, “All that the Lord hath spoken we will do,” and, under the tension of the struggle of the conquest they adhered so far to their resolution. But a nation such as they were is not easily educated to the point of a permanent conformity to a law such as they acknowledge. It was only some sixty years from the time when the law was given to the death of Joshua, when they became exposed to every temptation which would appeal to their inborn superstition and draw them away from their fidelity; and the consequence, though it may not agree with our preconceived notions of development, is too consistent with human experience and with the history of religious progress. The age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles exhibits an ignorance and superstition which make the existence of the Apostolic age almost incredible. Even in the days of the Apostles themselves, as we gather from St. Paul's Epistles, there prevailed among professing Christians practices sadly at variance with the religion to which they adhered; and nowhere is the vast distance between a truth taught and a truth apprehended more manifestly apparent than in the case of the disciples of Christ while He was with them. The period of the Judges is intelligible on the supposition that a religion had been given to Israel, up to whose standard they were to be gradually raised; and the sacred writer, while putting faithfully on record the shortcomings of the period, recognises the design of Providence even in these. It was an important period in the religious education of the people; their enemies were left among them, and they were left to struggle with them, that by them God might “prove Israel” (iii. 1).

* See, for example, Joshua, § 4, p. 62.

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL.

1. *Name.*—The books designated in the Jewish lists the *Former Prophets* are four in number, viz., Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings; in other words, the two Books of Samuel, as we now have them, are reckoned as one, and likewise the two Books of Kings. The division into two of each of these books, which now prevails and is followed in our English Bible, is found in the Septuagint and other early versions. These versions, however, regarded the Books of Samuel and Kings as forming one connected series, the four parts of which were called the four Books of *the Kingdoms* or of *the Kings*. The earliest printed Hebrew Bibles adopted that division and retained even the double titles; so that the First Book of Samuel was called by that name, and also “the First Book of the Kings,” while what is now the First Book of Kings was so designated and was also called “the Third Book of the Kings.” This mode of reckoning had its justification in the fact that in the four books taken together we have the history of the Kings or of the two Kingdoms from the very beginning to the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Yet, as literary productions, the Books of Samuel and those of Kings are from different hands, belong to different periods, and are respectively marked by clearly discernible characteristics.

It will be convenient to treat of the two Books of Samuel together, as they originally formed one whole and are closely connected together in subject and in literary features. The name of Samuel, which is attached to them, cannot, it is evident, denote authorship, for the record of his death comes as early as the twenty-fifth chapter of the first book. Yet there was an appropriateness in naming these books after the last of the Judges, who called to their office the first two kings and gave an impulse to the monarchy and the national life which long survived him. Both by his personal influence over Saul and David, and by the relation in which he stood to the prophetic movement, Samuel’s activity may be said to extend to the close of the

period covered by the books which bear his name; so that the older title of the books is more felicitous than that given to them in the early versions.

2. *The Period.*—The history embraced in the Books of Samuel extends from the close of the period of the Judges to the death of David. As in the case of other books, a connection is maintained with the preceding and the succeeding periods, so as to present a continuous history. Thus, at the commencement, the judgeship of Eli is introduced to prepare for that of Samuel, who may be reckoned as the last of the judges; and, at the close, the reign of David, is represented as at an end, although, in fact, its final scenes are only first described in the First Book of Kings.

From the manner in which the narrative breaks off before the death of David some have concluded that the writer, who certainly lived after David's time (*see* 2 Sam. v. 5), did actually carry down his history till the close of David's reign, or even until the time of Solomon. It has even been supposed that the opening portion of the First Book of Kings may have originally been joined to the Books of Samuel. Considering, however, that Solomon actually began to reign before the death of his father, and looking to the manner in which the concluding chapters of 2 Samuel introduce a variety of matters belonging to the close of David's reign, without arranging them in strict chronological order, it is more probable that the present division is the original one, and that the absence of strict literary finish is to be explained by the fact that the author had written materials before him which he put together in the form in which he found them.

The history contained in these two books thus centres round the three principal personages who were prominent in the period. The period of Samuel extends to 1 Sam. xii., the reign of Saul to the end of the first book, while the second book narrates the events of the reign of David. But these periods, again, are so closely interwoven with one another that they cannot be represented independently. Samuel's activity begins while Eli is still judge, and is continued even after his own demission of that office. So under Saul's reign David is already the anointed king, and the events related in that period concern David as much as Saul; and finally, David's reign is not ended when the activity of Solomon begins. All this will be more apparent if we now take a summary view of the contents of the two books.

3. *Contents of First Book.*—The first book opens at the time when Eli was priest at Shiloh and the recognised judge of Israel. Samuel, the son of a praying mother, is dedicated by his parents to the service of the Lord, and grows up leading a pure priestly

life at the sanctuary, affording a silent rebuke to the corrupt lives of Eli's sons and a demonstration of the insufficiency of a mere hereditary priesthood. When the doom of the unfaithful priestly family is clearly denounced, he is specially marked out as a prophet, and is so regarded by the people at large (iii. 1—20). He commences his public work at Shiloh, and comes into national prominence when the threatened Divine vengeance falls upon Israel in the victory of the Philistines, the loss of the ark, and the ruin of Eli's house (iii. 21—v. 1). Under his wise and godly administration there is a revival of national piety and patriotism, the Divine favour is shown in the return of the ark from the country of the Philistines (v. 2—vii. 1), the heart of Israel is turned to God in penitence; and, in the strength of their restored zeal, they achieve a victory over their enemies at Ebenezer.

This was the turning-point in the national fortunes, the culmination of the influence of Samuel, who continued to foster the piety of the nation by circuits made from Ramah over the adjacent country (vii. 2—17). But the period had come when the national life of Israel was to assume a new form. The evils of the hereditary priestly power, on the one hand (viii. 1. ff.), and, on the other, the desire of the people to be like the neighbouring nations, prepared for the institution of the monarchy. The request of the people for a king is complied with, although the dangers to which this would lead are exposed, and the principle of a pure theocracy on which the nation was incorporated are emphasised (viii. 4—22). Saul is anointed by the prophet (ix. 1—x. 16), his appointment is ratified by the lot and by legal ordinance (x. 17—26), and vindicated against gainsayers by the king's successful exploit against the Ammonites (x. 27—xi. 15); and then Samuel formally lays down his office of judge (xii). The bravery of the new king is seen in the manner in which he wages war with the neighbouring Philistines and Amalekites, the valour of his son Jonathan being equally conspicuous (xiii., xiv.). The king is, however, constantly reminded by Samuel that he reigns under the direct command of God; and, after he has twice disobeyed instructions conveyed through the prophet (xiii. 8 ff., xv. 9 ff.), sentence of his rejection is pronounced, and it is intimated that a worthier man is to reign.

From this point onward to the end of the book we have an account of the gradual rise of David and of the fall of Saul. Chosen by God, David is set apart by prophetic anointing (xvi. 1—13), comes to the court of Saul, who is afflicted with melancholy (xvi. 14—23), and by his exploit against Goliath of Gath attracts the notice of the king, gains the friendship of Jonathan,

and wins favour with all the people (xvii. 1—xviii. 7). This popularity of David excites Saul's envy, so that he seeks by craft to compass his death, and finally pursues him with open hostility (xviii. 8—xix. 1). Warned by Jonathan, David first takes refuge with Samuel at Naioth in Ramah, whence, being further informed by his faithful friend of Saul's continued opposition, he flees to the Philistines, who send him back to Judah (xix. 2—xxi. 15). At Adullam there gathers round him a multitude of disaffected men, and he is joined by Gad the Seer, who advises him to remain in Judah. A fresh outburst of Saul's enmity, however, forces him to send his parents for safety to the land of Moab, and Saul's vengeance is wreaked upon the priests at Nob for their suspected encouragement of the outlaw (xxii.). Yet even in his exile David engages in warfare against the Philistines, the enemies of his country (xxiii. 1 ff.); and this exhibition of patriotism, together with his generosity in sparing Saul on two occasions when the king was in his power, causes the more thoughtful people in the country to regard him as a person to be respected.

After the death of Samuel, who had been his close friend, David is regarded by the nation as the divinely appointed leader; though he still has to elude the violence of Saul, being hunted from place to place, and narrowly escaping with his life at Keilah, Maon, Engedi, Paran and Ziph (xxiii.—xxvi.). He finally quits Judah, and seeks an asylum with Achish, King of Gath, who assigns him Ziklag as a place of residence. Still, however, he is at heart an enemy of the enemy of his country (xxvii., xxx.), and only by the jealousy of the lords of the Philistines themselves is saved from the necessity of taking part in a war against Judah (xxix., xxx.). Saul himself, driven to desperation, seeks to obtain, through the witch at Endor, some counsel from the departed Samuel, but hears only a repetition of the doom which the prophet had uttered while alive (xxviii.). is defeated by the Philistines at the battle of Gilboa, and falls by his own hand (xxx.).

4. *Contents of Second Book.*—The second book is devoted to the reign of David. In chapters i.—iv., relating to the seven years and a half that he reigned over Judah in Hebron, we have the beautiful elegy on the death of Saul and Jonathan, the account of the setting up of Ishbosheth, Saul's son, as king at Mahanaim, the fall of that prince and the extinction of the dynasty of Saul by the treacherous murder of Abner by Joab, and the assassination of Ishbosheth himself. The former crime is lamented by David in a beautiful elegy over Abner, and the latter he avenged by the execution of the murderers. The remaining

chapters (v.—xxiv.) relate to David's rule over all Israel in Jerusalem. Gaining a victory over the Jebusites he takes their city and makes it the capital of his kingdom and the royal residence (v. 1—16). After another victory over the Philistines, Jerusalem becomes also the seat of the ark of the covenant, and preparations are made for a more permanent and more magnificent representation of the national unity and worship. Directions are given regarding the building of the Temple, and promises of the continuance of the Davidic dynasty are conveyed through Nathan the prophet, who is the king's faithful guide and counsellor (v. 17—vii. 29). The boundaries of the kingdom are extended from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates by conquests over the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, and Syrians (viii. 1—14): and the account of the prosperity of the empire is concluded with a description of David's magnificence and an enumeration of his court officials; his greatness being enhanced by the generosity he displayed towards the descendants of Saul and the firmness he exercised in dealing with outside enemies of his country (viii. 15—x. 19).

But another aspect of the history is presented in the chapters which follow. In these we see the domestic and personal life of David, with the consequences of his acts on the affairs of his later years and on the development of the succeeding history of the monarchy. His sin in the matter of Bathsheba (xi.) is followed by trouble, grief, and humiliation in his own family, culminating in the rebellion of Absalom (xii.—xv. 12). The flight of David from Jerusalem, the civil war, and the king's return after the victory, are narrated at length (xv. 13—xix. 40); and then follows a section showing the growing jealousy between Judah and the other tribes, breaking out in the revolt of Sheba the son of Bichri, and foreshadowing the rupture of the united kingdom (xix. 41—xx. 22).

The four concluding chapters contain supplementary matters of various kinds. Thus we have an account of the famine and the means by which it was removed (xxi. 1—14); lists of the names and notices of the exploits of David's mighty men (xx. 23—26; xxi. 15—22; xxiii. 8—39); poetical pieces of David's composition (xxii. 1—xxiii. 7); and, finally, an account of the numbering of the people, which was punished by a visitation of the plague and atoned for by sacrifice (xxiv.).

5. *Composition.*—From the preceding sketch of their contents it will be apparent that the two Books of Samuel are one connected composition, put together by some one who from the outset had the succeeding history and its close before his eye. At the same time the slightest perusal of the Books of Kings will show that

they have not come from the same hand as those before us. For example, there is no mention in the Books of Samuel of the Captivity, nor any reference to it, or even to the decline of the kingdom of the ten tribes ; whereas the writer of the Books of Kings has in view the catastrophe of the kingdoms, and narrates the downfall of both of them.

Again, in the Books of Samuel, the law is not quoted, and is only once referred to (in 1 Sam. x. 25), whereas the author of the Books of Kings sees in the past history which he relates the causes of the disasters which he has to record, passes condemnation on one king after another for departing from the ordinances of the law, and connects the national decline with the forsaking of the national religion and the tampering with idolatrous worship. So also, while the writer of the Books of Samuel makes no distinct citations of any written materials which he may have employed, except in one place in which he refers to the Book of Jashar (2 Sam. i. 18), the writer of the Books of Kings, standing at a greater distance from the events which he records, cites his authorities, and refers to writings of which he has made use, wherein are to be found fuller details than those which he thought it his province to repeat.

Besides those differences the whole style and manner of composition show that the Books of Samuel constitute an independent work. As to the time of its composition, we have only slight indications to guide us to a decision. The absence of reference to the Captivity would prove that it was written before the Exile. That the writer lived a considerable time after the events which he relates may be concluded from the formula "till this day" which repeatedly occurs (1 Sam. v. 5 ; vi. 18 ; xxvii. 6 ; xxx. 25 ; 2 Sam. iv. 3 ; vi. 8 ; xviii. 18), and also from the reference to a usage existing "beforetime in Israel" (1 Sam. ix. 9), and the antiquarian remark as to the dress of the king's daughters (2 Sam. xiii. 18). Again, when the full number of years that David reigned both in Hebron and Jerusalem is stated (2 Sam. v. 5), it is plain that the writer wrote after David's death ; and when it is said (1 Sam. xxvii. 6) that "Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day," we must infer that the schism of the kingdom had by this time taken place (if indeed, the reference is not even, as some suppose, to the time when the kingdom of Judah alone existed).

Such references are, however, very general and indecisive, especially as we know so little of the process through which the Old Testament books may have passed before they assumed their final form ; and, accordingly, while some would place the composition of the Books of Samuel in the first decades after the

schism of the kingdom, others would bring the date down to a short time before the Babylonian Captivity, or even place it in the time of the Exile. But, at whatever time it was written, the book has the honest and fearless tone of the true prophetic spirit of ancient Israel. Although the greatest prominence is given to the reign of David, and the antecedent narrative, with evident purpose, leads up to him who was the first of the long dynasty of the kings of Judah, yet his faults and sins are depicted with so firm a hand that it is plain the book was not composed for the purpose of throwing a halo of fictitious glory round his character or magnifying the splendour of his reign. In this respect the tone of the writer is in marked contrast with that of a writer like Josephus, or even the author of the Book of the Chronicles, who looked back upon a period which was already long past and who necessarily regarded things from a different standpoint.

6. *Sources.*—Though the writer of these books makes sparing reference to written sources from which he may have drawn materials for his work, we may conclude with some certainty that he did make use of such compositions. The only direct reference is to the Book of Jashar (2 Sam. i. 18), in which the lament on Saul and Jonathan was contained. Whether or not other poetical pieces found in the books were drawn from the same source, it is clear that they are not given as the author's own compositions, and are thereby shown to have been taken up by him from some source, oral or written, into his narrative. Such pieces are, the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 1—10); David's lament over Abner (2 Sam. iii. 33 f.); the poetical piece in 2 Sam. xxii., which is the same as Psalm xviii.; and “the last words of David” given in 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7.

It is quite probable, also, that the writer availed himself of official documents, state lists, and so forth, or even incorporated them bodily, in such passages as 2 Sam. xxi. 15—22; xxiii. 8—39, where there are lists of brave men in David's service and records of their exploits. In 2 Sam. viii. 16—18 (compare xx. 24), in the list of court officials a “recorder,” or chronicler, and a “scribe,” or secretary, appear. The existence of officials of this description makes it probable that documents of a public kind were at hand for reference and that writing was not uncommon at the time. Moreover, besides such public documents referred to or incorporated in the books, there are pretty evident traces of distinct narratives, referring to the same events or relating different series of events, which have been put together by the hand from which the books came in their completed form; and there is nothing in this supposition inconsistent with what we

otherwise know of the composition of the Old Testament books. It is quite probable that the prophetic men, in their addresses to the people that resorted to them, or in the assemblies of their disciples, gave forth recitals of events that were preserved orally or in writing, and were afterwards collected by the writers of these books. When two such accounts referring to the same events are preserved, it is almost certain that they will exhibit discrepancies, which, without an accurate knowledge of all the details, it may be difficult to reconcile.

For example, in the passages relating to David's first appearance at the court of Saul, there are some particulars which seem scarcely to be in harmony with one another. David is represented as having been summoned to the court to act as musician to Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 19—23): and yet, when the war with the Philistines breaks out, he is at home at Bethlehem attending to the sheep, comes only on an errand to the camp, apparently a stranger to warfare, and is unknown to the king (xvii. 12—31, 55—58). Accordingly many have been led to conclude that in chapters xvi. to xviii. there are really two accounts of David's entrance on public life, which have become fused together. It is remarkable that the Septuagint Version, in its older form as represented in the Vatican manuscript, does not contain several passages of these chapters, and, by their omission, exhibits a narrative which is consecutive and consistent throughout. And in this connection it is to be mentioned that the Hebrew text of the Books of Samuel seems to have been less carefully handed down than that of most of the books of the Old Testament, and that in several passages the Septuagint translators clearly had another text before them than that which is found in our Hebrew Bibles.

From literary causes of this kind, and also from displacement of materials, if, as it is probable, the books were composed out of different documents, discrepancies and difficulties occur in various passages, the explanation of which is otherwise not clear. Thus, it is said in 1 Sam. vii. 13, that "the Philistines came no more into the coast of Israel all the days of Samuel," and yet in chapter ix. 16, Saul is appointed king to save Israel from the oppression of the Philistines, and the severity of their oppression is described in x. 5 and xiii. So also there is a difficulty in understanding how Samuel's command to Saul to go down to Gilgal and wait for him seven days (1 Sam. x. 8) is so far separated from xiii. 8, which refers to that command.

Peculiarities like these do not, however, warrant the conclusion which some would draw from them that the one account or the other is false, or that one of the divergent accounts represents a

late and unhistorical conception. One would expect a later writer to strive after a harmonising of accounts rather than to introduce a contradiction ; and the fact that different documents which formally present discrepancies are allowed to stand side by side is a strong presumption that they both came from ancient sources, and were believed by the compiler to be reconcilable from some point of view. It is most certainly an excess of criticism to assume that certain accounts of events that are similar and are stated to have occurred more than once, are merely different forms of a tradition of one and the same event. Twice the rejection of Saul is pronounced (1 Sam. xiii. 8—14, and xv. 12 ff.); twice he is spared by David (xxiv. and xxvi.); twice David flees to the Philistines (xxi. 10—15, and xxvii. 1 f.); twice the prophetic excitement comes upon Saul (x. 10—12, and xix. 22—24); and twice the “evil spirit of the Lord” seizes him (xviii. 10 f., and xix. 9 f.). But there is nothing impossible or, in the circumstances, improbable in all this ; while the details in the different cases vary so much that the rise of the two narratives from one common event is not by any means clear.

7. *The Prophetic Order.*—Perhaps the most striking feature that presents itself in these books is the prophetic activity which begins with Samuel himself, and takes its place as a permanent influence in the religious development of the succeeding history. No explanation of the origin of prophecy is given ; it is spoken of as a thing well recognised and understood ; but some of its earlier manifestations are not a little remarkable. It is in connection with a communication of the Divine purpose to Samuel that it is said that “all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord” (1 Sam. iii. 20). And this is in keeping with the idea of the prophet expressed in the Pentateuch ; he is one in whose mouth God has put His words, and who speaks to the people all that God has commanded (Deut. xviii. 18). He was of old time called a seer (1 Sam. ix. 9) ; even in the writing prophets a prophecy is called a vision (Isaiah i. 1), and Amos tells us the *words* which he *saw*.

The prophetic activity of Samuel’s days, manifested in the excitement and musical exercises of bands of prophetic men, has by some recent writers been explained simply as the result of high-strung patriotic feeling, which in Israel was always closely related to religion ; and these manifestations have been regarded as altogether different from the regular activity of the prophets whose written words have come down to us. But this seems to be a confusion of cause and effect, for it is more natural to

explain the tension of religious and patriotic feeling as produced by the prophetic influence ; the association of the prophets in companies shows that the movement was deeply rooted in the theocratic life, and the continuance of the so-called "schools of the prophets" down to a time at which written prophecy commences shows that the movement was not the result of temporary excitement. Moses, in fact, is, to the Old Testament writers, the type of the prophet who receives communications of God's will, "not in dark speeches" but plainly (Num. xii. 8), and makes it known with authority to God's people. And as at the birth of the nation we see Moses and Aaron standing together and acting in concert, as representatives of the prophetic and priestly influences, so here, at a revival of national life, Samuel combines in himself the two offices ; and at all succeeding crises in the history, when the nation made a new advance, the two are found conjoined or working in harmony.

It cannot be satisfactorily proved that prophecy arose as a reaction against the priesthood, or that the two were, in their nature, antagonistic influences. The two are essentially there from the beginning, just because the religion had its two elements of spirit and outward form. At most an examination of the history will show that when, by a common tendency, the form came to be exclusively attended to, the prophetic voice was raised to declare that the form without the spirit was not only worthless but was wrong. This truth, expressed by Samuel in the words "to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. xv. 22), is the burden of all succeeding prophecy ; for the law was based on a fundamental covenant ; and prophecy therefore, though not an enforcement of the law in its detailed prescriptions, is a continual insistence on the principle without which the law has no meaning.

But though the spirit of prophecy is thus as old as the covenant, the prophetic activity, as an organised and sustained movement, comes before us first in the time of Samuel, and so in Acts iii. 24, he is reckoned the first of the prophets. All the outward features of its manifestation, the highly strung feelings and ecstatic utterances of the prophetic bands, their concerted movement, and, as it would appear, the common life in the Naoi or coenobite dwellings, are deeply interesting. We are left entirely to conjecture as to the mode in which the prophetic men spent their time, and the nature of the external association in which they were held together, and also as to the connection between their earlier manifestations and the so-called "schools of the prophets" in the times of Elijah and Elisha. Much ingenious speculation has been employed in the endeavour to

reconstruct these prophetic societies and to trace back to them various similar movements of later times. And though a great deal of this speculation has been unprofitable, the fact cannot be ignored that from this time is to be dated, if not the beginning, yet certainly the formal embodiment of a movement which lasted throughout the history of Israel, and was a most powerful feature in the moulding of the national religion and life.

8. *Poetic Activity.*—The connection of music with the prophetic activity of Samuel's time is noteworthy in several respects. The company of prophets whom Saul met coming down from the high place had "a psaltery and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp, before them" as they prophesied (1 Sam. x. 5); and the association of music with prophecy seems to have been permanent, for we read of Elisha, on one occasion, calling for a minstrel, and "when the minstrel played the hand of the Lord came upon him" (2 Kings iii. 15). This musical element throws much light on the account of Saul's contact with the prophets. The word denoting "to prophesy" is, in fact, used also of the king's accessions of madness (1 Sam. xviii. 10), and is applied to "raving" generally. Thus a son of the prophets who came with a message to Jehu is contemptuously called a "mad fellow" by Jehu's brother officers (2 Kings ix. 11), and "to be mad" and "to act the prophet" are by Jeremiah spoken of as synonymous (Jer. xxix. 26). Yet the same word is employed to denote the prophet's normal activity, which was not necessarily accompanied with ecstatic utterances. And so when the writer of the Books of Chronicles is describing the provision made for the regular and orderly Temple music, he says, "they separated for the service certain of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals" (1 Chr. xxv. 1—3, R.V.), which is explained farther on of "giving thanks and praising the Lord."

It is natural, indeed, to suppose that, as prophetic utterance was not always ecstatic, music was not always boisterous; and as prophecy did not die when the excited phase had passed, neither did music continue to be always associated with excitement. The time of Samuel was not the first period in the history of Israel when national song was called forth by the stirring of national feeling; but it was a time well fitted to give a special stimulus to the spirit of patriotism and religion to which the national songs of Israel give expression. Hence we may conclude that, as prophecy from this time onward took its place as an abiding element of the religious life of the nation, sacred song also from this time received a new impulse and entered upon a course of more regular development.

We are told that David sojourned for a time in Naoth at Ramah (1 Sam. xix. 18, 19), and he was not only befriended by Samuel, but closely associated with other prophetic men. Now the poetic activity of David was so famous that the whole collection of the Psalms has come to bear his name; and it is remarkable that he appears as a poet and musician just at the time when this movement took such a lively turn in the companies of the prophets. The Psalter is a collection of compositions belonging to ages far apart and to circumstances the most varied; but it is quite as unwarrantable to relegate the great bulk of them to late times (as some would do) as to ascribe them all in the mass to David or to his time. The combination of circumstances brought before us in the Books of Samuel, however, warrants the conclusion that from this time onwards *sacred* song received a strong impulse.

Cultivated in the prophetic circles, poetry not only retained its national and patriotic tone, but became also more exalted and spiritual in its religious expression, and entered therefore as a powerful factor into the history of the nation in the succeeding ages. And it is essential to bear this in mind if we would obtain a just appreciation and comprehensive idea of the development of the history of Israel. We must study the Psalms, as well as the historical and legal books, if we would follow the course which the Hebrew spirit took in the process of Divine education through which it passed; and such a study will show that, underneath the exterior of a common life that was sometimes rude enough, and alongside a ceremonial worship that was often corrupt, there was a current of religious feeling and genuine faith, bearing on the best of the nation to better conceptions of Divine things. The song of Hannah and the undisputed early productions of David give evidence of this, and the note struck in these compositions swells louder and louder as the volume of psalmody increases.

9. *Historiography*.—Among the prophetic men who appear at this early period are some who are mentioned in the much later Book of Chronicles as writers of histories. Nathan, Gad, and Samuel himself are thus spoken of:—“Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the history of Samuel the seer, and in the history of Nathan the prophet, and in the history of Gad the seer” (1 Chron. xxix. 29, R.V.). Now, although the history of Samuel here mentioned can hardly be the Books of Samuel before us, yet it is generally admitted that he must have occupied himself with work of this kind; and the reference of the Chronicler to such writings can only mean that works ascribed to these men existed in his day. The same writer

in other places refers to similar histories by other prophets of the reigns of various kings of a later period.*

That the later prophets occupied themselves with the writing of history we know from the Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and everything tends to show that the movement in that direction began at a much earlier period. The time of Samuel was favourable to such a movement, a time when the nation became distinctly conscious of its national position and apprehended that it had a history to make. By that time it had a past to look back to, a future to which to look forward, and an arduous task before it in the present. Men of prophetic spirit, reflecting over these things, would become, as a matter of course, historians, politicians, and forecasters of the future; and all the prophets partake of these characters. From the addresses of Samuel and other prophets of that early time we may gather what were the subjects of thought and themes of discourse in the gatherings of the Naoth, in the circles of the prophetic men, and in the assemblies of a more public kind frequented by the people. The great deeds done for the nation, the faithfulness of God to His covenant, the duty of serving Him alone and avoiding all heathen contamination, would be insisted on, and reproofs for backsliding and warnings against idolatry would be freely administered. In such circles the stories of the patriarchs and the deeds of heroes of more recent times would be treasured and commented upon; and among such men there would be no lack of persons capable of writing down, and disposed to commit to writing, much that hitherto had been preserved orally.

The number of the names of men so employed which is given by the Chronicler is very considerable, as we have seen, and the series extends over the whole historical period. When, therefore, we know that the time of Samuel and that which followed it were favourable to this literary activity, and when we perceive the same spirit breathing through all the historical books, we may conclude that the authors of the "sources" out of which these books were composed, if not the authors of the books as they stand substantially before us, were just such prophetic men. No other men capable of executing such work are known to us, and when we substitute for such abstractions as Elohist, Jehovah, and so forth, the names of these prophetic historians, we seem to get a nearer view of the literary activity and religious life of ancient Israel. When we look at the leading men from Samuel onwards, who may be supposed to have concerned themselves with the writing of the nation's history, they are not men repre-

* See 2 Chr. ix. 29; xii. 15; xiii. 22; xx. 34; xxvi. 22; xxxii. 32; xxxiii. 18—19.

senting each a single idea or an exclusive tendency, but men standing in close relations to the complex circumstances of the growing life of the nation. David is in equally close fellowship with priests and with prophets; and whenever there was a stirring of the national life, the best of the nation, of whatever class, participated in the movement.

Moreover, if there was thus a succession of men from Samuel's time onwards who concerned themselves with the writing of national compositions, it is not difficult to understand how such prophets as Amos and Hosea, who open the series of writing prophets, employ a literary language and are masters of a finished style. When Wellhausen seeks to explain the fact that we have no written compositions of Elijah and Elisha, while Amos and Hosea, a century later, appear suddenly as authors, all he has to say is that, in the meantime, a non-literary had developed into a literary age. But the details that we gather from the books of Samuel tend to show that a process of preparation had been going on, and that literary activity was not a hasty product. Just as the earliest writing prophets claim to be not teachers of a new truth but upholders of an older faith, so as authors they are not sudden apparitions, but the outcome of a preceding literary activity.

10. *Transition to the Monarchy.*—The great historical event of the period covered by these books is the setting up of the monarchy in Israel, and, particularly, the establishment of the Davidic dynasty, which lasted to the close of the nation's history. That the people of Israel continued up to this time without a king, while surrounded by peoples that possessed that form of government, is a proof that there must have been a strong bond of national union among the tribes; and that the kingdom, when once established, so soon gained wide dominion and paramount influence, is a proof that the tribal organization was well compacted. Moreover, that the dynasty of David took root so firmly and held its position for so many generations, proves that it was based upon the principles which had hitherto held the people together, answered the nation's needs at the time, and fostered their aspirations. The abortive attempt of Abimelech to rule at Shechem (*Judges ix.*), and the complete collapse of Saul's house, show what the monarchy of Israel might have been if it had been a mere political expedient. The fate of the northern kingdom, with its changes of dynasty and sudden revolutions, shows what the monarchy actually became when divorced from the theocratic principles which lay at the foundation of the national existence.

What these principles were appears from the attitude of Samuel towards both Saul and David: the king ruled, not by

the will of the people, much less according to his own arbitrary will, but by the will of God, and, equally with the most humble Israelite, he was a subject of the God of Israel, the Lord of Hosts. Saul, choosing to reign like the kings of the nations, forfeited his position, while David, recognising the constitution by which he ruled, had "a sure house." Closely identifying himself with the prophetic movement, he showed himself to be in sympathy with the spirit which kept the nation alive; careful for the outward observance of worship, and solicitous for the building of a Temple which should form a fitting centre for its exercise, he showed how sensible he was of the importance of maintaining a visible and striking manifestation of the faith which the nation professed. His own religious feeling and confident trust in God gave emphasis to these public acts; so that he became to the people the ideal of the Lord's anointed, identified with his people, the embodiment of the idea on which Israel, as a kingdom of priests, was constituted. From his time onward grew the expectation of a Messiah, who, as King, Priest, and Prophet, at the head of an ideal state, was to fulfil all things.

The influences that were to educate the people to higher spiritual conceptions were now at work, and the settled arrangements of a consolidated state afforded the framework within which these influences were to operate. God works slowly: in His providence the foundations were thus laid for compacting the nation that was to be the bearer of light to the world; and, though it needed the discipline of centuries to bring it to maturity, there was planted at this early time the seed of a kingdom that would never be moved. In its outward aspect the age of David is, in many respects, rude enough. The wars that he waged, the generals who served him, the people who followed him into battle, are very much like what we see elsewhere in "secular" history; the character of the king himself is far from perfect; and the historian gives the best guarantee of the truth of his narrative in placing all these things faithfully on record. But when we look beneath the surface, we see that the strivings and strugglings of men in human passions were being guided by a Divine hand; and only thus can we explain the fact that while great empires have crumbled into oblivion, the little kingdom set up in the person of David, the son of Jesse, survived the calamities of neighbouring states and handed down to the world an imperishable inheritance of blessing.

THE BOOKS OF KINGS.

1. *The Books as one whole.*—The two Books of Kings, like the two Books of Samuel, are to be regarded as one work.* The title they bear has been applied to them because they give an account of the history of Israel during the greater part of the monarchical period, viz. from the accession of Solomon to the Babylonian Captivity. Though the two Books of Kings continue the story of the two Books of Samuel in such a manner that the series of the four books constitutes a connected history, yet the most superficial examination reveals the fact that the two works are independent compositions from different hands; and a closer examination brings to light striking differences in their conception and literary form. They must also have been written at different times; for whereas the Books of Samuel make no reference to the Babylonian Captivity, nor even to the decline of the northern kingdom, the Books of Kings bring down the history to the thirty-seventh year of the Captivity (2 Kings xxv. 27 ff.).

That the history closes at that particular point is a pretty clear indication that the writer who was last engaged on the work did not survive the Captivity, and from an expression in one passage it may be inferred that he lived among the exiles. In 1 Kings iv. 24, it is stated in regard to Solomon, according to the Authorised Version, that he had dominion “over all the region on this side the river,” *i.e.* the river Euphrates; but the original, as given literally in the margin of the Revised Version, has “all the region beyond the river,” an expression which would be more appropriate if used by a writer in Babylon. At the same time, however, there are in both the Books of Kings a number of passages which speak of the kingdom of Judah as still in existence and the Temple as still standing; † and the

* See the Books of Samuel, § 1, p. 77.

† See 1 Kings viii. 8, ix. 21, xii. 19; 2 Kings x. 27, xiii. 23.

frequently recurring formula "till this day" seems always to refer to the period before, and chiefly to the period immediately before, the Captivity.

Expressions of this kind favour the supposition that a historical work, similar to the work before us, was composed shortly before the Exile, and that what we now have is a revision or later edition of the same, continued to the point at which its history closes. In one passage, the seventeenth chapter of the second book, we may even detect traces of the different editions; for in verses 18 and 21, belonging to the original work, Judah is represented as still a kingdom, whereas verses 19 and 20, added by the last writer, indicate that the southern kingdom also had been swept away. The statement of the Talmud is that Jeremiah wrote the Books of Kings, and certain similarities of style give a show of support to that view; yet the literary resemblances are such as can be accounted for by the writers living about the same time and moving amid the same circumstances; and, moreover, it is most probable that the last chapter of the Book of Jeremiah, which most closely resembles the corresponding narrative of the Books of Kings, was added by an editor to the writings of the prophet. The truth is, there is no conclusive evidence to determine who was the author of the books before us.

2. *Divisions and Contents.*—The combined work embraced in these two books may be divided, according to the matters treated of, into three parts: the first relating to the reign of Solomon, the second to the divided kingdom, and the third to the surviving kingdom of Judah.

(i.) The *first part*, extending from chapter i. to xi. of the first book, is confined to the reign of Solomon. It has been noted in the chapter on the Books of Samuel (§ 2) that these chapters are closely related to the conclusion of those books, inasmuch as Solomon began his reign during the lifetime of his father David. By the wisdom and foresight of the prophet Nathan, who had been David's close friend and faithful counsellor, the throne was secured for Solomon in the face of an attempt at usurpation on the part of Adonijah (chapter i.). The young king, being publicly proclaimed and exhibited to the people, receives his father's last charge, and, after David's death, takes such measures against those who had conspired to exclude him from the succession, that his throne is firmly secured (chapter ii.). The writer then gives an account of the internal condition of the kingdom during Solomon's reign (iii. 1—ix. 9). The wisdom of the king is shown in the matter of the dream which he had at Gibeon (iii. 1—15), and in his decision of a difficult matter referred to him for

judgment (iii. 16—28). Then follows a description of the arrangements of the royal household, of the distribution of high officers up and down the land, and of the king's magnificence and fame, which excited the admiration of neighbouring princes (chapter iv.). Chief among these was Hiram, king of Tyre, with whom Solomon made a friendly treaty. By the terms of this treaty he received, in exchange for the produce of the country, materials and workmen for the construction of the Temple and the royal palace, the particulars of which are contained in chapters v.—vii., while chapter viii. concludes the narrative with a full account of the consecration of the Temple and Solomon's dedicatory prayer.

It is to be observed that this section opens and closes with significant hints of the danger attending so much prosperity and luxury. Thus, in chapter iii. 1—3, it is stated that Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and took his daughter to wife, and that the king and the people sacrificed in the high places; and in chapter ix. 1—9, after the dedication of the Temple, along with a promise of blessing in case of obedience, there is a warning given that, if the people should serve other gods, their land would be made desolate and their Temple ruined. From the internal affairs of the kingdom the historian passes to its foreign relations (ix. 10—xi. 43). Details are given of Solomon's intercourse with Hiram, king of Tyre, his alliance by marriage with the king of Egypt, his maritime commerce with Ophir, and the visit of the queen of Sheba to Jerusalem (ix. 10—x. 13). The description of the wealth and luxury to be seen at the court and capital (x. 14—29) is significantly followed by an enumeration of the heathen wives whom Solomon married, who turned away his heart from the God of his fathers, and led him to pay reverence to the deities of their native lands (xi. 1—8); and this leads to a solemn denunciation of the king's unfaithfulness, and a prophecy of the disruption of the kingdom (xi. 9—13). The historian then indicates the quarters from which trouble was to arise, by enumerating the “adversaries” raised up in Solomon's reign—Hadad the Edomite, Rezon of Zobah, and Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, of Ephraim; and with a distinct intimation of the impending schism the account of Solomon's reign closes (xi. 14—43).

(ii.) The history of the divided kingdom is the subject of the *second part*, embracing 1 Kings xii. to 2 Kings xvii. This part may be divided into three periods: the first extending to the time of Ahab, king of Israel, during which there was a sharp opposition between the northern and southern kingdoms; the second coming down to the commencement of the reign of Joash

of Judah, during which, owing to a marriage alliance of the two reigning families, the northern kingdom stood in close friendly relations with the southern; and the third reaching to the downfall of Samaria, when the two kingdoms are again less friendly, or even at hostility.

(a) In the first period (1 Kings xii. 1—xvi. 28) the historian shows how the discontent of the people broke out on the death of Solomon, and how it was, by the incapacity of his son Rehoboam, goaded to open revolt under Jeroboam; how the schism was recognised by the prophets as a thing “from the Lord;” and how it was widened and perpetuated by Jeroboam’s setting up of sanctuaries at Dan and Bethel, and his appointment of priests who were not of Levitical extraction (xii. 1—xv. 20). In the southern kingdom, Rehoboam and Abijam hold the reins of government with weak hands, and the former suffers humiliation from the forces of Egypt, while both are in constant hostility with the northern kingdom (xv. 21—xv. 8). Asa, however, brings about a reformation, and, by the aid of Benhadad, king of Syria, is successful in his conflict with Israel (xv. 9—24). In the northern kingdom, the dynasty of Jeroboam comes to an end with the death of his son Nadab, after a reign of two years; Baasha usurps the throne, and, after a reign of twenty-four years, is succeeded by his son Elah, who, after a reign of two years, is murdered by his own servant Zimri. But the murderer had no sooner seized the throne than he was successfully attacked by Omri, the head of the army, between whom, again, and Tibni there arose a civil war of four years’ duration, resulting in the success of Omri and the founding of the dynasty which came to bear his name.

(b) The second period, which covers the duration of the house of Omri, is treated of in 1 Kings xvi. 29—2 Kings xi. 20. Ahab, the son of Omri, during a reign of twenty-two years, raises the northern kingdom to a condition of great outward prosperity, the capital being finally fixed at Samaria. But having married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Phoenicia, he introduces the worship of the Tyrian Baal and Astarte as the state religion. Against this a vigorous protest is raised by the prophet Elijah, by whose exertions, in the face of the queen’s opposition, the priests of Baal are slain and the people of Israel brought back in a measure to the recognition of Jehovah as the national God (1 Kings xvi. 29—xix. 14); intimations of further judgments on the house of Omri and more thorough reformation of religion being given in the selection of Elisha and Jehu to carry on the work which Elijah had begun (xix. 15—21). Ahab wages successful war against Benhadad, king of Syria, but the tyranny of

his rule is exhibited in his treatment of Naboth of Jezreel (xx.—xxi.); and, in a renewed war with Syria, he suffers defeat at Ramoth-Gilead, and is mortally wounded (1 Kings xxii. 1—40). In this battle he was accompanied by Jehoshaphat, the pious king of Judah, who was in alliance, for warlike and commercial purposes, first with Ahab, and then with his successors, Ahaziah and Joram (1 Kings xxii. 40—53; 2 Kings iii.). The alliance between the two kingdoms was more closely cemented by the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel, the infamous queen of the northern kingdom (2 Kings viii. 16—18), a union of fatal issue to the kingdom of Judah.

Meanwhile Elisha, after the translation of his master Elijah, exercises the prophetic office, acting as the head of the prophetic associations in various centres, and recognised as a prophet of God even in the kingdom of Syria (2 Kings iv. 1—viii. 15). But the iniquities of the house of Omri brought about at last the ruin of that dynasty, and involved also in disaster the allied house of Judah. For Joram, king of Israel, being wounded in war with the Syrians, is suddenly attacked by his impetuous general Jehu and put to death along with Jezebel and her grandson Ahaziah, king of Judah, who happened to be at Jezreel on a visit to his sick kinsman. Jehu, regarding himself as the executioner of a Divine sentence, orders the slaughter of the priests of Baal, roots out the foreign worship, kills all the members of the royal family on whom he can lay hands, and establishes a new dynasty in the northern kingdom (2 Kings ix.—x.). At Jerusalem, Athaliah, mother of Ahaziah, hearing of the murder of her son at Jezreel, puts to death all the seed royal, the infant Joash alone escaping, and reigns herself for six years. At the end of that time, the young prince, who had been brought up by Jehosheba, daughter of king Jehoram, is shown to the people by Jehoiada, the high priest, and is proclaimed and accepted as king; Athaliah herself perishing in the insurrection (2 Kings xi.).

(e) With her death and the disappearance of the house of Omri the third period begins, in which the relations of the two kingdoms are again those of indifference or hostility (2 Kings xii. —xviii.). Joash of Judah, under the guidance of Jehoiada, the high priest, puts away the idolatrous customs that had been introduced by Athaliah, and brings about a reform of worship; but he had to buy off an invasion of Hazrel, king of Damascus (2 Kings xii.). In the northern kingdom, the rulers of the house of Jehu follow all the evil courses of their predecessors, the Phoenician Baal-worship excepted, but in the struggle with the

kingdom of Syria they are more fortunate than their southern neighbours (2 Kings xiii. 1—13, 22—25), and inflict humiliation also upon the kingdom of the south. For Amaziah of Judah, the successor of Joash, proudly elated by a victory gained over the Edomites, challenges the king of Israel to combat, and Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, comes up against him, defeats him and breaks down part of the wall of Jerusalem (xiv. 1—16). Joash of Israel is succeeded by his son Jeroboam II., who rules with great energy for forty-one years, and regains nearly all the territory formerly possessed by Israel (xiv. 23—29).

At the same time, also, the kingdom of Judah, under Azariah, or Uzziah, who had a reign of fifty-two years, enjoys great prosperity. The northern kingdom, however, having reached its highest point of greatness under Jeroboam, hastens to its decline as soon as his firm grasp of government is relaxed. With the death of his son Zechariah, the dynasty of Jehu comes to a close. A succession of usurpers occupies the throne, while the beginning of the end is seen in the steady advance of the Assyrians and the subjection of the weakened kingdom of Israel to the great eastern empire. Shallum reigns only a month when he is murdered by Menahem, who gives tribute to Pul of Assyria to gain his support on the throne. His son, Pekahiah, after a reign of two years, is dethroned by Pekah, one of his officers, in whose reign Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, falls upon the country, takes a great part of territory, and carries away many of the inhabitants; and Pekah in turn is dethroned and succeeded by Hoshea (2 Kings xv. 8—31).

Meantime, in the kingdom of Judah, Uzziah had been succeeded by his son Jotham, whose reign is marked by the beginning of opposition from Pekah of Israel, aided by Rezin of Damascus (xv. 32—38). The hostility is continued in the reign of his son Ahaz, who, seeing his capital besieged and territory being lost, sends presents and offers of submission to Tiglath-pileser of Assyria, as conditions of receiving help against his two powerful neighbours (xvi. 1—8). In consequence of this the king of Assyria marches against Damascus and kills Rezin; and, later on, Shalmaneser, who had accepted Hoshea as a tributary, "finds conspiracy in him" and comes up against him. The army of Assyria, after a siege of three years, takes and destroys Samaria, thus putting an end to the northern kingdom, multitudes of the people being carried captive and foreigners settled in their room (2 Kings xvi. 9—17).

(iii.) The kingdom of the ten tribes having thus come to an end, the historian, in the *third part*, constituting the remainder of the book (2 Kings xviii.—xxv.), follows the fortunes of the

surviving kingdom of Judah. Hezekiah, in the sixth year of whose reign Samaria fell, set about the work of reformation in his dominions, and received powerful aid in this work from the prophet Isaiah. God's pleasure was manifested to him in the miraculous deliverance from the invading army of Sennacherib, and in his restoration from a dangerous illness ; but he was reproved for his conduct on the occasion of the embassy of Merodach-Baladan of Babylon, and a hint was given to him of the doom that was to overtake his kingdom (xviii.—xx.).

After his death the impiety of his successors, Manasseh and Amon, hastened the threatened disaster (xxi.). Not even the reforming zeal and pious intentions of Josiah, in whose reign the law-book was found in the Temple, nor the reforms in accordance with its requirements which he set on foot, could avert the catastrophe. Josiah himself is killed fighting at Megiddo against Necho, king of Egypt (xxii. 1—xxiii. 30), who places on the throne Eliakim (or Jehoiakim) instead of another son of Josiah, named Jehoahaz, who had, by the will of the people, reigned three months at Jerusalem. Jehoiakim is hard pressed by the Babylonian power as well as by the neighbouring peoples ; and his son and successor, Jehoiachin, is reduced so low that he surrenders himself to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who carries off the king and ten thousand of the people, and sets on the throne Mattaniah, the king's uncle, changing his name to Zedekiah.

With this king the independence of the kingdom of Judah comes to an end ; for Nebuchadnezzar, to punish him for an attempt to throw off the yoke of subjection, marched with an army into Judah, and after a siege of about three years took the capital, plundered and destroyed it, carrying captive or putting to death large numbers of the inhabitants. The few that remained, having risen against Gedaliah, who had been appointed governor, and having put him to death, took refuge in Egypt to escape the wrath of the king of Babylon. The land was thus left of its inhabitants, and the Book of Kings closes when thirty-seven years of the Captivity had passed, king Jehoiachin being still alive and treated with honour in the land of his captivity (xxiii. 31—xxv. 30).

3. *Purpose and Plan.*—From the foregoing sketch of the contents of the Books of Kings, we may gather what was the purpose of the writer in composing them, and may note the literary form of the composition. His object evidently was to exhibit the bloom and decay of the kingdom of Israel, and to trace the influences which moulded its varying destiny. He

represents the whole history, from first to last, as under the direct control of the religious government of Jehovah, the national God, and he proceeds on the fixed idea that the promise given to David of a sure house remained in force during all the vicissitudes of the divided kingdom, and was not even frustrated by the fall of the kingdom of Judah. This confidence appears in the terms of David's farewell charge to his son Solomon (1 Kings ii. 4), is repeated on the occasion of the schism of the ten tribes (1 Kings xi. 34—39), and recurs again and again to explain why the wickedness of successive kings did not make a final end of the state.* Even at the close of the narrative, in the significant mention of the royal treatment in captivity of the last king of David's stock (2 Kings xxv. 27—30), the writer silently conveys the promise that a branch was to grow out of its roots. In this respect the author of the book before us is in accord with the writers of other historical books of the Old Testament, particularly with the writer of the Books of Samuel (see 2 Sam. vii.).

From a literary point of view, however, this book has characteristics which mark its individuality and distinguish it particularly from the preceding Book of Samuel. The writer lays out for himself a sort of literary framework, marked by the recurrence of the same or similar phrases, to indicate the beginning, continuance, and close of successive reigns, reminding us, in this feature, of the style of the Book of Judges; and within this literary framework his materials are arranged with great regularity. Thus, at the commencement of a reign, it is generally stated how old the king was when he came to the throne, how many years he reigned, and, in the case of the kings of Judah, what was his mother's name. There is then a general judgment pronounced on the character of his reign, whether he "did that which was right" or "did that which was evil" in the eyes of the Lord; and, at the close of the reign, the place of burial is mentioned and the name of the succeeding ruler given,† with a reference to another authority in which a fuller account of the king's deeds is recorded.

In giving the history of the divided kingdom, the author's mode of proceeding generally is to record first the events relating to the northern kingdom, and then to give the contemporaneous history of the kingdom of Judah, thus dividing the history off into periods of longer or shorter duration. So closely is this mode of writing adhered to, that events which have a common bearing on the two kingdoms are related separately under the

* See 1 Kings xv. 4, 5; 2 Kings viii. 19: xix. 34; xx. 6.

† See e.g. 1 Kings xi. 43; xiv. 20, 21; xv. 26; 2 Kings iii. 2.

head of each. Thus, under the reign of Pekah of Israel it is stated (2 Kings xv. 20) that Tiglath-pileser came up and took part of his territory, while under the contemporaneous reign of Ahaz of Judah (xvi. 7 ff.), we see that the invasion was at the instance of the southern king, contrived as a relief against his enemies on the northern frontier. In the same way the invasion of Shalmaneser is mentioned under the reigns of Hoshea of Israel (2 Kings xvii. 5, 6) and of Hezekiah of Judah (xviii. 9 ff.); and under the contemporaneous reigns of Asa of Judah and Baasha of Israel the identical statement is repeated that "there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days" (1 Kings xv. 16, 32).

4. *Sources.*—A work extending over so long a period of history as is covered by the *Booke of Kings* can evidently not be the expression of the direct personal knowledge of the writer. From the nature of the composition, he must have had recourse to written materials; and there are differences in style in different parts which suggest that the work is to a certain extent the result of compilation. The literary peculiarity which has been pointed out in the preceding paragraph makes it probable that the writer availed himself of records of the two kingdoms in their separate forms, and put so much of them together, in their original words, as suited his purpose. That he was not careful to adjust his extracts to the circumstances of his own time we can see by several examples: as where it is said that the staves of the ark remained "unto this day" as they were placed in Solomon's time (1 Kings viii. 8), and that "Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day" (xii. 19). So also there is a close verbal agreement between the passages 2 Kings xviii. 15—xx. 19 and Isaiah xxxvi.—xxxix., as also between many parts of the *Books of Kings* and those of *Chronicles*, indicating that they are drawn from common sources.

And here we come upon a feature which distinguishes the *Books of Kings* broadly from the books which precede them. Whatever use the writer of the *Books of Samuel*, for instance, made of pre-existing written documents, he makes sparing reference to them by name;* and in the case of these and other books it is only by critical examination that we can separate the different sources employed. It would seem that, for the events recorded in the earlier chapters of the *Books of Kings*, the author of these books made use of documents relating to the reign of David, such as, although unnamed, were used also by the writer of the *Books of Samuel*. But in the succeeding parts of his

* See the *Books of Samuel*, § 6, pp. 83, 84.

work he makes constant reference, at the close of the various reigns, to certain records by name from which he apparently drew his materials, and to which he refers his readers for "the rest of the acts," and so forth, of the kings whose doings he has briefly related.

The works thus referred to are: "The Book of the Acts of Solomon," for the reign of that king (1 Kings xi. 41); and for succeeding rulers, "The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel," to which there are seventeen references (1 Kings xiv. 19, &c.); and "The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah," referred to fourteen times (1 Kings xiv. 29, &c.). Some have supposed that these were formal compositions of a historical character, of the nature of a work referred to in 2 Chronicles xxiv. 27, as "The Story of the Book of the Kings," and that our author made quotations from them for his account of the different reigns. But it is more probable that they were the State records of the two kingdoms, of a political and statistical character, kept by the official recorders or scribes, who are enumerated among the court officials.* This is rendered the more probable by the nature of the references. Thus, for example, the records of the kings of Judah are, under the reign of Asa, referred to for the rest of his acts, "and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built" (1 Kings xv. 23); and those of the kings of Israel, under the reign of Ahab, for "all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built" (1 Kings xxii. 29).

It is remarkable that the few cases in which there is no reference to these records at all are cases in which the reign came to a sudden or violent end, as those of Joram of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah, who were both swept away in the furious onset of Jehu (2 Kings ix. 21—28), and of Hoshea of Israel, and Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah of Judah, who close their reigns amid the wreck of their respective kingdoms. From this we may infer that the records in question were made up at the close of each reign, and that in the cases mentioned they were left unfinished in the disasters which overtook the kings. Besides these documents of a more official description, it is pretty evident that the writer made use of other compositions of a more general and popular character, in which were related the sayings and doings of men like Elijah and Elisha, who figure so prominently in these books.

It will be observed that the passages which refer to these two prophets are interspersed in the general narrative, and form

* The Books of Samuel, § 6, pp. 83, 84.

connected pieces by themselves, capable of being removed without disturbing the adjacent history. Elijah is introduced abruptly, without explanation, into the narrative (1 Kings xvii. 1), and the accounts of his doings and those of his successor, Elisha, which are written in a more flowing style than the main portion of the books, are such as would not naturally have found a place in the State annals.

5. *Prophetic Activity*.—The prophetic activity which is seen commencing in the time of Samuel* was in full operation in the time of the kings; and the books before us, not merely by the personal notices they give of lives and acts of individual prophets, but by the close connection in which they represent these men as standing with the political and religious movements of the times, furnish materials for a history of prophetic activity as much as they exhibit the material and political growth of the nation. Thus, at the crisis of the handing over of the reins of government to Solomon, at the opening of the books, Nathan the prophet is even a more prominent person than either the king or his aged father (1 Kings i. 22 ff.). Ahijah of Shiloh, watching the course of events that was leading to the rupture of the kingdom, declares to Jeroboam with a voice of authority the destiny that is before him and the Divine purpose controlling the events (1 Kings xi. 29—39); and with equal authority he pronounces at a later time the doom which would befall the house of Jeroboam for their wickedness (xiv. 5—16).

On the other hand, Rehoboam is warned by Shemaiah, “the man of God,” to desist from attempts at forcible union of the northern tribes, because the thing was “from the Lord” (1 Kings xii. 22—24). So did Jehu, the son of Hanani, denounce the sins of Baasha and foretell his fate (1 Kings xvi. 1—4, 7, 12). The contest of Elijah with Ahab, and the influence of Elisha on public affairs in his time, are not less remarkable than their general prophetic work, and the writer purposely shows how these men were as important factors in the history as the kings whose affairs they controlled. So we have the fearless Micaiah, son of Imlah, delivering an unpleasant “word of the Lord” to two powerful kings and in the face of the flattering testimony of a crowd of false prophets (1 Kings xxii. 5—8). Isaiah, the son of Amoz, in the reign of Hezekiah, occupies a far higher position as adviser to the king than any court official (2 Kings xix. 20—34, xx. 1—19); and Huldah, the prophetess, in the time of Josiah, when the law-book was found in the Temple, is resorted to for advice by priests and high officers of State (2 Kings xxii. 12—14).

* The Books of Samuel, § 7, pp. 85, 86.

14 ff.). Besides these, whose public influence is more apparent, we have a reference to the prophetic activity of Jonah, son of Amittai, of Gath-hepher (2 Kings xiv. 25); and notices and words of unnamed prophets, as of the "man of God" who came out of Judah to Bethel, and cried against the altar of Jeroboam (1 Kings xiii. 1—32); of others who assured Ahab of victory over Benhadad of Syria, and reproved him for not slaying his enemy (1 Kings xx. 12—15, 28, 35—43); and of the prophets who at Jerusalem foretold the ruin of the southern kingdom for the iniquities of Manasseh (2 Kings xxi. 10—15).*

Some of the details regarding these prophetic men may, as has been already said, have been drawn from special compositions in which the lives and teaching of the prophets were recorded; but in the great majority of instances where the prophetic influence is exerted, the narrative of the historian would lose all its point and force, and reduce itself to the barest chronicle of events, if the prophets and their work did not appear in his pages. Even as it is, we know, by a comparison of the writings of prophetic men that have come down to us, that many events which here occupy little space and receive but slight notice, were pregnant with meaning for good or ill to Israel; and we require to read those writings along with the Books of Kings in order to obtain anything like an adequate conception of the history which is here briefly related.

6. *Standpoint*.—It is the prophetic tone which has just been alluded to that makes these books history, as distinguished from a bald chronicle. The historian leaves us in no doubt as to the spirit in which he treats his subject. His whole aim is to exhibit the course of events as so controlled by the Divine Hand, that faithfulness to God ensured blessing and unfaithfulness brought down His displeasure and led to national decline. Just as the writer of the Book of Judges sums up the period of which he treats in a comprehensive survey,† so the writer of the books before us is continually reminding his readers of his guiding principle, and now and then expands it into a general review of the whole cycle of events, from beginning to end, which he has set himself to relate. Passages of this kind are found in 2 Kings xvii. 7—23, 32—41; xxiii. 27. In such passages the writer

* It is somewhat remarkable that the prophet Jeremiah, who plays so important a part in the closing history of the kingdom of Judah, is not once mentioned in these books; and some would take this as an indication that he had a hand in their composition, according to the statement of the Talmud (see § 1). But it is hardly possible that he was the final editor, for by the time the work was completed he must have been, if still alive, of a very great age.

† See the Book of Judges, § 3, p. 70.

insists on the fact that it was because Israel forsook their God and walked in the statutes of the heathen that they lost their national independence.

Writing at a period when the influences, human and divine, which had moulded the history, had had time to show their developments, he holds these up to light in his pages, exhibiting at once what God had done for His people, and the manner in which they had requited His goodness. In the true spirit of prophecy he does not reprove the people for their neglect of outward ordinances nor insist on the ceremonial part of the law, but reproves them for forgetting the God that brought them out of the land of Egypt, for turning a deaf ear to the prophets, and for rejecting "His statutes and His covenant that He made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He testified against them" (2 Kings xvii. 15).

This is the aspect in which the prophets always regard the law, as a fundamental principle underlying its specific observances; but though our author makes only such general allusions to the Mosaic law, neither he nor any other Old Testament writer gives any foundation for the idea of some modern writers that the law was nothing but the "instruction" of the prophets conveyed from time to time as occasion called it forth. He declares that the Lord testified "against Israel and against Judah by all the prophets and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets" (2 Kings xvii. 13). In numerous passages there are such allusions to "statutes" and "judgments" and "commandments," the very terms which the Pentateuch itself employs, which can only refer to some code or codes which were sufficient to regulate the moral and religious life of the nation, and must have been known to the people whom the prophets addressed.

It is customary, among those who believe that the Book of Deuteronomy originated about the time of Josiah,* to say that the writer of the Books of Kings had his conceptions of the law coloured by the code which was the only one of any extent known in his day; and they point to the minuteness of detail which he exhibits in his description of the building of Solomon's Temple, and his palliation of the worship on the high-places before that time (1 Kings iii. 2), in proof that he attached great importance to a central sanctuary. But as it was not by any means impossible for Moses, at the beginning of the nation's history, to fore-

* See Introduction to the Pentateuch, § 10, pp. 11, 12, and Deuteronomy, § 6, p. 55.

see the dangers to which Israel would be exposed from heathen worship in Canaan, and to guard against such dangers by legislation, so also it was but natural for a writer, living at the close of the nation's history, and seeing the havoc wrought by the idolatrous practices of evil times, to condemn in the severest terms the worship of the high-places and kindred heathen corruptions, which in both kingdoms had caused so much mischief.

To conclude that there was no ceremonial prescribed before the time of Solomon, and no recognised code of law beyond the Book of the Covenant up to the time of Josiah, is not warranted by anything stated in the Books of Kings, nor, it may be added, by the omission of anything which is not stated. It is self-evident that an orderly Temple service is necessary in a recognised Temple, and the very condemnation of the sacrifices of the heathen implies legalised and authoritative sacrifices. It is incredible that a writer should continually uphold the honour and dignity of a priesthood that had no prescribed functions, and blame the people for worship on the high-places if they knew no other worship to practise.

Whatever may have been the law-book that was found in the reign of Josiah (and, after all has been said, it is not proved that it was nothing but the Code of Deuteronomy), the writer of our books proceeds on the supposition that there was one central sanctuary from the time of Solomon at least, and implies that Israel was in possession of laws and ceremonies distinctly opposed to those of the nations around them. If he does not furnish us with details of the history of ritual worship, it is simply because this lay beyond the purpose he had before him, and was only remotely connected with his guiding principle.

7. *Credibility.*—As records of the history of the Israelite people during the time that they enjoyed national independence as a monarchy, these Books of Kings have their credibility amply attested by the records of neighbouring states, so far as these are available. The Moabite Stone, discovered in 1868, with an inscription of Mesha, king of that country, recording his successes, besides its interest as an early specimen of writing, had a special value in that it referred to events touched upon in the books before us (2 Kings iii. 4—27). Not only did it confirm the account there given of the relations subsisting between the Israelites and the Moabites, but it implied, and could only be rightly understood by assuming, the details which the Biblical writer communicates; so that, read along with the passage just referred to, and 2 Chron. xx., it enables us to construct an interesting history of the movements that took place at that time on the eastern borders of Palestine.

Of late years also we have gained an ever-increasing mass of materials, in the Assyrian inscriptions, to compare with the Hebrew records for the events that brought the great empire of the East upon the scene of the affairs of Israel and Judah. As these monuments have been from time to time brought to light and deciphered, they have not only confirmed the statements of the Old Testament writers, but have made clear many points which their brief narratives left in obscurity. It is interesting to note that on these inscriptions the kingdom of the ten tribes is almost uniformly spoken of as "the land of the house of Omri," Jehu himself being styled "son of Omri," showing, as the Moabite Stone also indicates, that that dynasty, the first of whom, according to 1 Kings xvi. 24, made Samaria the capital of the northern kingdom, enjoyed a high reputation among foreign peoples. More particularly, the successes and reverses of the kingdoms of Israel and Damascus, in their various collisions, which are only lightly touched on by the writer of the Books of Kings, are shown by these monuments to have been mainly influenced by alliances made by the one or the other with the great empire of the East, just as the same power also controlled the relations of Ahaz to his northern neighbours.*

In general, it may be said, that for the period preceding the fall of Samaria (B.C. 722) the Assyrian inscriptions largely supplement the slight notices of the Books of Kings, and for the succeeding period they are found to confirm in many minute details the accounts, which become fuller in these books and in the prophetical writings, on all subjects in which they are mutually concerned. It has, for example, been now definitely ascertained that Pul, mentioned in 2 Kings xv. 19 f., as to whose identity there was much doubt, is the same person, under a Babylonian name, as Tiglath-pileser, the king of Assyria, and that he styles himself, on the monuments, "king of Babylon" as well as "king of Assyria."

This discovery has tended to reduce, to a certain extent, a wide divergence which at that point of the history existed between the Assyrian and the Hebrew dates; though it cannot be claimed that the difficulties in the chronology of the Biblical writers have been settled by the newer discoveries. Research has brought to light very complete lists of Assyrian rulers, after whom the years were reckoned; and from these and the so-called canon of Ptolemy (which mentions eclipses and other astronomical phenomena), a well-defined system of chronology has been computed, by which the exact dates of the notable events in Assyrian and Babylonian history are determined. On the other hand, the

* See e.g. 1 Kings xx. ; 2 Kings x. 32—36 ; xv. 19, 20 ; xvi. 5—10, &c.

Books of Kings contain a system of chronology of their own, in which the dates of accession of the rulers of the one kingdom are fixed in relation to the contemporaneous reign in the other, and the length of the various reigns is stated.

On comparing the two systems it is found that, while they agree in the date for the fall of Samaria, they diverge more or less widely both before and after that event.* The differences cannot be explained on the supposition of errors in the copying of numbers in the manuscripts, but must be due to the mode of computation adopted by the Hebrew writer. In the first place, the system of reckoning the accession of a king of Israel from the year of the reign of the king of Judah, and *vice versa*, is most probably to be ascribed to the last editor of the Books of Kings, for it was not likely to be found in the official annals of the respective kingdoms; and then it was no doubt based on earlier statements of the length of reigns, and so forth, which gave only approximate and round numbers.

According to the Hebrew reckoning the whole time intervening between the Exodus from Egypt and the return from the Babylonian Captivity fell into two nearly equal periods of about 480 years each, the building of the Temple (1 Kings vi. 1) representing the middle point; and the frequent recurrence of the number 40 both in the Books of Kings and in the Book of Judges †

* The divergences in regard to some of the more prominent events may be stated: the battle of Karkar, in which Ahab, in alliance with Benhadad of Syria (see 1 Kings xx. 34), was defeated, was, according to the monuments, fought in B.C. 854, whereas Ahab's reign, according to the Biblical chronology, extends from 918 to 897; Jehu, "the son of Omri," gives tribute to the Assyrian king while the latter wages war against Hazael of Damascus (see 2 Kings x. 32) in the year 842, though his reign on the Biblical chronology is given as 884-856; Menahem's tribute (2 Kings xv. 19) is recorded on the monuments in 738, but his reign on the Biblical reckoning extends from 771-761; and the invasion of Sennacherib (2 Kings xviii. 13) is fixed by the monuments at 701, whereas, on the Hebrew mode of computation, it falls in 714.

† See the Book of Judges, § 2, end, p. 69. The reigns of David, Solomon, and Joash, are each given as 40 years. Stade maintains that the number 40 is artfully concealed in other cases. Thus the reigns of Rehoboam and Abijam together amount to 20 years, or half of 40; Asa reigns 41 years; the reigns from Jehoshaphat to Athaliah make up another 40; those of Amaziah and Uzziah combined give the number 81 or one more than twice 40; and from Jotham to the sixth year of Hezekiah (when Samaria was destroyed) is a period of 38, or two years less than 40, the deficiency being made up by the two additional years in preceding periods. Moreover, he says, the remainder of Hezekiah's reign, together with those of Manasseh and Amon, gives another 80 years. In the same way he finds 16 to be the base number for the reigns of the kings of Israel from Jehu to Hoshea, and 12 for the period preceding. But it would be easy to perform feats of that kind with any series of numbers.

makes it probable that it came to be customary to divide these two periods each into twelve parts of 40 years. That strict numerical accuracy was not aimed at is seen in the habit of stating a king's reign in complete years, of which we have a striking example in the case of David (2 Sam. v. 4, 5). Yet, while in this matter we ought to accept thankfully the aids furnished by the Assyrian inscriptions* towards a more precise chronology, the divergent system of the books before us does not detract from the substantial accuracy of the narrative, which finds striking confirmation from the same monuments.

8. *Brevity of the Narrative.*—It is but an outline after all that these books give of the history of the four centuries to which they relate. From the time of David, indeed, to the Exile, the nation of Israel lived its life as an independent, organized state, rising from the condition of a community of hardy tribesmen to the position of a powerful empire, and again disappearing from the scene of political affairs. In the northern kingdom, twenty kings, belonging to nine different dynasties, occupied the throne, while the southern kingdom, with its one dynasty of David, had a succession of nineteen kings from Rehoboam to its fall; yet we have but the scantiest record of the deeds of these rulers, and of the social, religious, and national changes that took place during their reigns. Many important events occurred which are only glanced at; many things which would have been of the deepest interest are passed by without mention; and our curiosity is only whetted by recurring references to lost records containing details which the author did not care to transfer to his pages. From hints dropped here and there, as well as from ancient monuments, we learn something of the part played by Israel and Judah on the broad theatre of the politics of the ancient world.

A series of writings from a succession of prophetical men who lived and taught during the period of the monarchy remains to cast much light on the political and religious movements in which they took part; and treasures of sacred song, from the time of David onwards, and compositions of a more speculative character, from the time of Solomon, have been preserved as evidences of the literary and mental activity of this long period. Old institutions must have been modified under altered circumstances; and there must have been a growth of ideas, an enlargement of views, a widening conception of their national calling on the part of the thinking men of the nation; but of all this the author of our books takes little note, leaving his readers to gather information from casual statements or from other works.

* Schrader, however, himself reminds us that these are not faultless, and require in detail to be handled critically.

It has been objected against him that in literary style he is even behind his predecessors, stiff and pedantic in his mode of representation, and so narrow and circumscribed in view that he measures everything by the ideas of his own late age. But, however it may be as to literary achievement, the author had his fixed view of the history, and, from his late standpoint, having seen the course which the history had run, he laid special stress upon the points on which it had turned. And we are bound to say that the experience of the world has confirmed his view. He does not lose himself in a multiplicity of details. It was of little moment to him that the proud house of Omri had raised the northern kingdom to greatness by brilliant deeds; a matter of comparative indifference to him that a king was rich and powerful, if he did not walk in the way that was right. In his brief, dry records of the doings and failings of the rulers of Israel and Judah, he has pointed out where the strength or weakness of a kingdom lies, and given us the most valuable lessons on political freedom. How many patriots and reformers, since his day, have been nerved to brave the fury of princes and do valiantly for the truth by the example of Old Testament prophets as set before them in these pages! And had the author of the Books of Kings done nothing more than this he had rendered incalculable service to the world.

His views may not be wide, but he does not deviate from his main position that a state stands secure only when it is founded on God's truth, and that it is preserved from danger only by His constant defence. He sees also, and the whole world has seen, that God had a special purpose in setting up the house of David at Jerusalem, and that His promise to that house did not fail of effect. The great empires of the East, with all their magnificence, have passed away and contributed but little to the world's good. The house of Omri perished and nearly involved the house of David in its fall; but the little kingdom of Judah, amid backslidings and shortcomings, was preserved till it was enabled to hand down to the world an enduring spiritual blessing. The fabric of an organized state held together till the seed of Divine truth had time to germinate and take deep root in the minds of those to whom it was revealed, and the decay of the outward state, and the failures of the best of human rulers, were the means by which these chosen ones were led to look for a kingdom which is not of this world.

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES.

1. *Title and Place in the Canon.*—The name by which these two books are designated in the English Bible owes its suggestion to Jerome, who described them as “a chronicle of the whole of sacred history.” After him, some editions of the Vulgate entitled the work “Chronicles,” or “Book of Chronicles,” and our translators adopted the name. It expresses pretty accurately the meaning of the title given in the Hebrew Bible, which is, literally, “The Acts,” or “Affairs of the Times,”—*i.e.* journals or annals. This was the name given to those records, kept by officials of the kings, which contained an account of the notable events in each reign;* and it was natural, when books of history came to be written mainly out of materials drawn from such registers, that they would receive a similar name, although, of course, they would be less restricted in their compass and mode of treatment. The Greek translators of the Old Testament, however, were not satisfied with this general name, and designated these books *Paraleipomena*, meaning “things passed over” or “left out,” from the idea that their author took up things which the writers of previous books had omitted or not fully related. This name, though aiming at greater precision, is not an accurate description of the books, as we shall presently see.

Like the Books of Samuel and Kings, the two Books of Chronicles originally constituted one work, the division into two being made by the Greek translators, although no doubt a pause of some kind existed in the original at the point where the division has been effected. The work is of late authorship. Besides many features in the original which show a decaying period of the language, we may observe that the mention of Cyrus (2 Chr. xxxvi. 22) and the tracing of the descendants of David to the sixth generation after Zerubbabel (1 Chr. iii. 19 ff.)

* See the Book of Kings, § 4, pp. 100, 101.

would bring the composition down to the close of the Persian or the early times of the Grecian domination.* It was for this reason that it was not included in the Hebrew canon among the *Former Prophets* or historical books, † but found a place among the *Hagiographa*, ‡ where it stands last among the books of the Hebrew Bible.

2. *Form and Plan*.—The first glance at the Books of Chronicles is sufficient to discover that these books are very different in form and conception from the historical books which precede them in the English Bible. Up to this point, the various books, from Genesis to Kings, had fitted into one another, so that one takes up the history where the preceding had dropped it, the whole giving a continuous history from the Creation to the Babylonian Captivity. The Books of Chronicles, however, beginning at Adam and coming down to the Restoration and, in its genealogical lists, to a period much later, seem to aim at giving in themselves a view of the whole period embraced in all these books put together. Yet they do not merely gather up details which had been omitted by previous writers, as the Septuagint translators imagined; for we find the repetition of many things which had formerly been narrated, and there are whole sections agreeing very closely in actual words with the Books of Kings.

A very slight examination shows also that, in literary form, the books present a striking contrast to those which immediately precede them. The author's predilection for genealogies and lists is very marked. He delights in tracing the ancestry of tribes and families and individuals back to the earliest times, and exhibits, in elaborate lists, the names and ranks of officials, the orders and functions of priests and Levites, and in general, the persons who held important offices or rendered special service. It will be noticed also that he concerns himself more with the religious than the political aspect of the history, and has much more to say about the outward observances of religion, the Temple and its ritual, the priests and their duties, than about the wars of the kings and the material prosperity of the people. And perhaps the most striking feature of the books that presents itself to the ordinary reader is the fact that the author deals almost exclusively with the history of the kingdom of Judah. The northern kingdom is only alluded to when its affairs touch upon those of the southern, while the whole line of the kings of the house of David passes in review, and its descendants are

* For the connection with the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, see the chapters on those books, § 1, p. 120, and § 5, pp. 126, 127.

† See Joshua, § 1, p. 58, and the Books of Samuel, § 1, p. 77.

‡ See the Book of Esther, § 1, note *.

traced far down beyond the time of the Restoration. In following the history, also, it will be observed that he dwells at particular length and with evident fondness on those reigns that were distinguished by zeal for religion and reformation of worship, bestowing praise on faithful kings and censure on those who swerved into evil ways. All this will appear more clearly if we examine in some detail the contents of the books.

3. *Contents of First Book*.—The first book brings the history down to the death of David. It contains ten chapters of introductory matter, and nineteen chapters relating to the reign of David. The introductory portion is almost entirely in the form of genealogical lists, which, however, are not given as matters of mere antiquarian interest, but are so arranged as to show that the author is leading on to give a history of the kingdom of Judah. Thus the lists in chapters i. and ii., beginning with Adam, give the genealogies of Japheth, Ham, Shem, Abraham, Ishmael, Esau and the Edomite kings, Jacob, and end with the families of Judah; and these are followed (in chapter iii.) by the succession of the royal race of David, carried down presumably to the author's own time. In chapters iv. to viii. we have genealogical tables of the twelve tribes of Israel, but special fulness of detail is shown in regard to the tribe of Levi (chap. vi.) who served at the Temple, and the tribe of Benjamin (vii. 6—12; viii. 1—40), to which a great many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem belonged (viii. 28, 32 f.). From the eighth chapter onwards the author leaves collective Israel out of account, and confines himself to the kingdom of the south, proceeding, by means of lists of the families of Jerusalem (ix. 1—34) and by a table of the genealogies of Saul and a brief notice of his fate (ix. 35—x. 14), to the main theme, the history of the royal house of David, with which the remaining chapters of the first book are concerned.

As, however, the main interest of the author centres in the religion and worship, David's reign at Hebron is passed over, and the scene is at once laid in Jerusalem. First there is an account of the election of the king by the elders at Hebron, of his consecration and anointing, and of the capture of Jerusalem (xi. 1—9); followed by lists of his heroes, his adherents before he came to the throne, and the crowds that assembled at Hebron to do him homage (xi. 10—xii. 40). Then comes an account of the removal of the ark from Kirjath-Jearim, and its temporary deposit in the house of Obed-Edom (xiii.), followed by details of the building of the royal palace, of the king's family, and a notice of his wars with the Philistines (xiv.). The formal removal of the ark to Jerusalem is narrated at length

(xv., xvi.), and David's purpose to build a temple is unfolded; but the execution of this work is postponed by prophetic advice, and a special blessing is pronounced on David and his descendants (xvii.).

In chapters xviii. to xx. we have a summary of the wars that David waged with surrounding nations, with a list of his chief officers and high officials (xviii. 15—17). It is then related how David was induced to number the people, and in consequence a plague broke out among them; and how, on the occasion of a sacrifice offered at its discontinuance, the king received instructions as to the site of the future place of worship, and set about making preparations for its erection (xxi., xxii.). Here follow lists of the Levites and priests according to their courses and offices (xxiii.—xxvi.), and similar lists of the divisions of the army, chiefs of the tribes, and royal functionaries (xxvii.). Then, at a public assembly held at Jerusalem, David in a formal manner makes arrangements for the succession of Solomon, charging him specially to persevere with the completion of the Temple (xxviii., xxix.), and having finished his work the king dies "in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour, and Solomon his son reigned in his stead."

4. *Contents of Second Book.*—The second book continues the history on the same principle, nine chapters being devoted to the reign of Solomon, and the rest to those of the succeeding kings. The author's predilection for all that pertains to the observances of religion shows itself again in his treatment of the reign of Solomon, six chapters being given to detailed descriptions of the various operations connected with the building and adornment of the Temple and provision for its services, and the solemn ceremonial observed at its dedication (ii.—vii.); while the arrangements made for the administration of the kingdom, and the account of the king's wealth and greatness, are comprised in two chapters (viii., ix.).

In what follows the writer gives, in chronological order, as in the Books of Kings, the successive reigns, confining himself, however, to the kingdom of Judah, and bestowing most attention on those reigns in which worship was properly observed, and religion flourished and Jerusalem prospered. He introduces the various prophetic men who appeared from time to time, especially when their message bears upon the observance of the national religion.

Thus we have an account of the reign of Rehoboam and the schism of the kingdom (x.—xii.), with the prophetic work of Ahijah the Shilonite (x. 15), and of Shemaiah "the man of God" (xi. 2, xii. 5); of Abijah and his victory over Jeroboam (xiii.);

and of Asa (xiv.—xvi.), with notices of the prophets Azariah the son of Oded (xv. 1), and Hanani “the seer” (xvi. 7). The reign of Jehoshaphat which follows is treated at greater length (xvii. 1—xxi. 1.). Here the author mentions the activity of various prophets (xviii. 7; xix. 2; xx. 14, 37), but dwells particularly on the arrangements made by the king for the instruction of the people in the law at the hands of priests and Levites, who “went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught among the people” (xvii. 7—9), and similar provision made for the administration of justice in the various centres of Judah (xix. 5 ff.).

The reigns of Joram (xxi. 2—20), of Ahaziah, and Athaliah (xxii., xxiii.) are briefly treated, special mention being made of the preservation of the infant Joash; and his reign gives the writer the opportunity of recording the taxing that took place for the repair of the Temple and the supply of sacred vessels. It was also signalled by the murder of Zechariah, the son of the king's faithful adviser Jehoiada, because he lifted up his voice against the apostasy into which Judah was betrayed (xxiv.). Next come the reigns of Amaziah, who was rebuked for his idolatry, and suffered defeat at the hands of Joash of Israel (xxv.); of Uzziah, who usurped priestly functions and was smitten with leprosy (xxvi.); of Jotham (xxvii.); and of Ahaz (xxviii.), in whose time appeared the prophet Oded with a message to the army of Israel, which had obtained a victory over Judah (xxviii. 9 ff.).

The reign of Hezekiah presents the writer with congenial topics (xxix.—xxxii.); for we have accounts of the cleansing of the Temple and the purification of the Levites after the desecration that had happened in the closing years of Ahaz; of the observance by the whole nation of the Passover with joy, the like of which had not been known since the time of Solomon (xxx. 26); and of the ordinances made by the king for the support of the priests and Levites and the maintenance of the sanctuary (xxx.). After the reign of Manasseh, with an account of his impiety, captivity, repentance, and restoration, and the brief reign of his son Amon (xxxiii.), the author comes to the reign of Josiah, which is again treated in fuller detail (xxxiv., xxxv.).

Here we have an account of the finding of the law-book in the Temple, the utterance of the prophetess Huldah, and the description of a celebration of a Passover such as had not been “kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet” (xxxv. 18). Finally, in the closing chapter (xxxvi.), he gives a brief history of the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and

Zedekiah, a short statement of the deportation, and, in a broken sentence, taken up again in the opening verses of the Book of Ezra, a notice of the restoration from captivity.

5. *Sources.*—The sources from which the author of these books drew the materials for his work are in part mentioned by himself and in part may be inferred from the nature of the materials presented. First of all, he makes frequent reference to what seems to have been one work, though it is designated by him sometimes as the “Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel” (2 Chr. xvi. 11; xxv. 26; xxviii. 26; xxxii. 32), and sometimes as “the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah” (2 Chr. xxvii. 7; xxxv. 27; xxxvi. 8). It may be the same which in one place (2 Chr. xx. 34) is briefly called “the Book of the Kings of Israel,” for by the time to which he then refers the kingdom of Israel in its limited sense had disappeared.

The work thus variously designated cannot have been the records to which the writer of the Books of Kings makes constant reference,* for these were the separate registers and state-papers of the individual kingdoms, whereas the work here named was a combined account of the two. Nor can it have been our present canonical Books of Kings to which the writer of Chronicles referred; for the work in question is said to have contained the deeds of the monarchs “first and last,” and *all* their wars and *all* their ways (2 Chr. xxvii. 7), and it is referred to for events and sayings which are not found in the Books of Kings. It would seem to have been a comprehensive work of a historical kind, relating to both Israel and Judah, and based no doubt on the respective annals of the two kingdoms.

That such historical works, of greater or less compass, had been produced before the author’s time is in itself probable, and it may be to such a work that he refers for the reign of Joash, under the name of “the *story* of the Book of the Kings” (2 Chr. xxiv. 27), and to another, for the reign of Abijah, under the name of “the *story* of the prophet Iddo” (xiii. 22). At the same time we have to remember that the canonical Books of Samuel and Kings were in existence by the time the Books of Chronicles were written, and were doubtless employed by the author in writing his own history. The great similarity of his language to that of those books, in parts which treat of the same subjects, may arise from his having quoted either directly from them or from the sources which they had in common. We can see, moreover, from the manner in which events recorded in the earlier books are implied without being actually related by the chronicler,

* See the Books of Kings, § 4, pp. 100, 101.

that he assumed these histories to be known to his readers.* Secondly, we find several references to writings designated by the names of prophetical men, as Samuel, Gad, and Nathan (1 Chr. xxix. 29; 2 Chr. ix. 29); Ahijah, Shemaiah, and Iddo (2 Chr. ix. 29; xii. 15); a writing of the prophet Isaiah relating to Uzziah (2 Chr. xxvi. 22), and apparently another in 2 Chr. xxxiii. 19.

From what is said in 2 Chr. xx. 34, and xxxii. 32 (*see* the Revised Version), it may be concluded that these writings, known by the names of their prophetical authors, were in some cases at least "inserted in the Book of the Kings," from which our author drew so largely, although it is quite probable that some of them were in circulation in separate form in his day. In addition to these compositions referred to by the writer himself, he must have had access to, and availed himself of, various registers, lists, and genealogies. Some of these, of a more national and public character, he no doubt found already incorporated in the historical work from which he drew so largely (*see* 1 Chr. ix. 1; xxvii. 24), while others, of a private or family description, would be the property of individuals or heads of tribes. Some of these documents seem to have been ancient and curious; for in the formal genealogical tables with which the work commences there are found not a few details for which we search in vain in the earlier books which cover the time to which they relate.

6. *Historical Value.*—It has been the fashion among a certain class of critics to speak disparagingly of the Books of the Chronicles, as if they had little or no independent historical value. It is variously alleged that the author of these books is only to be trusted when his statements are confirmed by other books, particularly by the Books of Kings; that what he has in common with preceding books is simply borrowed from them, and that all the rest is the product of late ideas, the misconception of the author's days; or even that he is guilty of deliberate falsification of history by means of fabricated lists of names and invented titles of books. Such accusations are both superficial and unjust. There is no reason to doubt the honesty of the author in the use of such materials as he had command of; nor is there any reason to question the existence of the writings to which he refers.

It is urged, indeed, that the writings in question, if they existed, were composed also at a late date, and were animated

* Compare, *e.g.*, 1 Sam. xxxi. 12, with 1 Chr. x. 12; 1 Kin. ix. 12, with 2 Chr. viii. 2; 1 Kin. iii. 1, with 2 Chr. viii. 11; 1 Kin. xi. 29—39, with 2 Chr. x. 15; 2 Kin. xviii. 3—6, with 2 Chr. xxx. 6, 7; 2 Kin. xx. 13—19, with 2 Chr. xxxii. 25, 31.

by the bias of a late time, and that therefore anything based upon them can have no historical value ; that, in short, by the time of the chronicler there were no original and trustworthy documents in existence that had not in substance been worked into earlier books of the canon. But all this is mere assertion. We know from the author of the Books of Kings himself that there were many things within his reach in written documents which he did not transfer to his pages ; and it is evident on the face of his books that they do not by any means give a complete account of the history of the centuries to which they relate.

As to discrepancies which are to be found between the Books of Chronicles and Kings, a great many of them are differences in names, numbers, and individual expressions, which may be accounted for on the supposition that the text of one or other of the books has not been correctly handed down. For the rest, the variations are such as might appear in two independent works, or may be attributed to the different standpoints and aims of the writers ; at all events, they do not warrant the sweeping charges that are brought against the writer of the books under consideration. It is quite clear that he had a special fondness for dwelling on all that pertained to the strict observance of the Temple worship, and a special purpose in relating throughout his work how the good kings attended to the orderly arrangements of all matters of religion. But if he thought fit to dwell on these things at greater length than the writer of the Books of the Kings had done, this is no reason for doubting his accuracy, any more than his omission of things which the other recorded is a reason for concluding that he did not know of these things. And if, in his narrative, he gives prominence to matters of ritual observance and priestly activity in the early monarchical period, and thus causes inconvenience to the theory of the late origin of the Levitical system, his statements are not on that account to be put aside as due to false conceptions of the ancient history, and therefore unworthy of credence.

A charge of falsifying history should not be made without very clear proof, and it is suspicious that it is brought precisely against those books which do not square with certain notions of the development of Israel's history. At the same time, it is to be remembered that no writer can divest himself of the ideas of his age, nor can his work be understood apart from his circumstances and training. There were good reasons why the writer of the Chronicles laid stress on certain aspects of the history of his nation ; and it may be granted that he read the record of the past in the light of his own time, reproducing in his own manner

the speeches of former ages, and freely handling his materials in a way that best suited the plan of his work. But when all this is admitted, we have done nothing to impugn his veracity or to detract from the substantial accuracy of his work, the main purpose of which was to present a particular aspect of the history of his nation, which had not been brought into prominence by former writers, but was regarded by him as of special value to the people of his own time.

7. *Standpoint*.—We must have regard to the period at which the writer of these books lived, and the circumstances of the people for whom he wrote, if we would understand the form in which they appear and the object for which they were composed. The national independence of Israel was a thing of the past, but the descendants of David, to whom had been given the promise of a sure house, survived. The Captivity had done its work; the exiles, thoroughly cured of the old tendency to idolatry, had been allowed to gather on their ancestral soil, to erect a temple on the ruins of that of Solomon, and to observe the rites of their national religion. The voice of prophecy had become silent; the two precious possessions that survived the Exile and bound the present to the past were the exercise of their religion and the offspring of David; round these clustered the hopes of the future, at a time when restored Israel was at the mercy of a heathen power for corporate existence and the semblance of national life.

At such a time and in such circumstances an author, taking a review of the past history of his nation, saw everything in a peculiar light, and would approach his work with a peculiar purpose. It had become a settled conviction that Israel had suffered for unfaithfulness in the matter of religion; and, as the forms of religion were more punctiliously observed after the Captivity, our author would look for the reigns in which these received due attention and dwell upon them as “the good old times” of the nation’s life, while he would perceive and emphasise the fact that it was when these were neglected that the unfaithful kings had suffered. From this point of view he set himself the task of writing the whole history of his nation, so as to sustain the courage of his people in their depressed condition, and give them guidance and hope for the future. The encouragement was, that so long as the community, deprived though they were of their old political independence, adhered to the observances of their national religion, they would be preserved from mingling among the nations and being lost; and the hope was, that if they so remained steadfast to the covenant, the God of their

fathers would remember "the sure mercies of David," and would, in His good time, "restore the kingdom to Israel."

Such a book, in short, would contribute not a little to keep alive the persistent separate existence of the Jewish race, which is one of the most striking features of history, and to stamp upon their later religious life the character which it retained for the succeeding centuries. The book was at once the result of the new impulse that had been given to the observance of the law at the time of Ezra,* and at the same time would tend to foster the same adherence to the forms of worship as the sole remaining bond of Israel's union and the mark of their separation from the heathen nations. And, if the tendency seems to us a falling away and a decay as compared with the earlier prophetic period, we are not to forget that it was only the natural hardening of the husk, after the bloom had disappeared, around the living seed which, after centuries of apparent death, was to burst forth into new and higher life.

* See the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, § 7, p. 120.

THE BOOKS OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

1. *Titles and Place in the Canon.*—These two books go naturally together. The men whose names they bear were contemporaries, and some of the most valuable information we possess in regard to Ezra is contained in the Book of Nehemiah. In the Talmud, indeed, and by Josephus and the early Church fathers, the two books are reckoned as one, called the Book of Ezra, although it is usually spoken of as consisting of two parts, called First and Second Ezra. In the Hebrew canon the two books are put separately, yet they are reckoned as forming only *one* of the twenty-four books into which the whole Old Testament is divided,* and the Masoretic conclusion which is usually appended to each book comes at the close of Nehemiah.

The explanation of this varying treatment of the books, according to which they were first regarded as one, then separated into two, and finally designated by two separate names, is no doubt due, as it has been expressed, to an “unconscious criticism.” It was perceived that the books, referring to the same time and situation, had so far a common origin, and yet they presented features which led to the appreciation of dual authorship. The hands of both Ezra and Nehemiah, in short, are discernible in the respective compositions, although a common influence is discernible in the reducing of them to the state in which they now appear before us.

In the Hebrew Bible the books are placed together after Daniel and before Chronicles, an arrangement which has been variously explained. In that position, as it will be perceived, the books before us continue the story of the Captivity contained in Daniel and give an account of the restoration; the Books of Chronicles then following as a complete summary of the history

* See the Book of Esther, § 1, note*, p. 131.

from the earliest times till the eve of the return from captivity. In our English Bible, however, Ezra and Nehemiah follow Chronicles, and can be read as a sequel to the history of these books.

It will be observed that the closing verses of Chronicles (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23) are almost identical with the opening words of Ezra—a feature which has led many to believe that the works originally formed one continuous composition, and which, at all events, shows that the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah were recognised as forming a natural continuation of the history of the Chronicles. Those books had brought down the history to the first year of Cyrus, and the books before us contain the history of the re-establishment of the Israelite society by the return of colonists, their settlement in Jerusalem, the rebuilding of the Temple and city, and the reorganisation of life and worship.

The narrative begins in the Book of Ezra at the first year of the reign of Cyrus, B.C. 538, and it is dropped in Nehemiah soon after the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, B.C. 432; so that the two books together carry us over a space of about a century. The whole history of this time, however, falls into three clearly defined periods. The first, treated of in the first six chapters of Ezra, is the time that elapsed from the first return of exiles to the completion of the Temple; the second, of which an account is contained in the remaining chapters of Ezra, is the period of his activity as leader of the second colony that came to Judaea; and the third, covered by the Book of Nehemiah, is the period of the activity of the two men in the reconstitution of the new community at Jerusalem. It will be convenient to speak of these three periods separately.

2. *First Period.*—The first period extends over twenty-three years, viz. from the first return of exiles in 538 till the completion of the Temple in the sixth year of Darius B.C. 515. The whole of this period was anterior to the coming of Ezra, and chapters i.—vi. of his book contain a succinct account of what was an arduous and almost hopeless struggle on the part of the first colonists to establish themselves in the city of their fathers. From the Books of Haggai and Zechariah, who belonged to that period, we gain much additional light on that troubled time; and the condition of the great empire under whose protection the colonists effected a settlement, as it is known to us from history, enables us to understand many things which are but lightly touched upon in the canonical books.

What we learn from the Book of Ezra is that Cyrus, in the first year of his reign, gave permission to as many of the Israelite exiles as were so disposed to return and settle in their native

land; that persons from the tribes of Judah, Levi, and Benjamin, as well as Nethinim, or Temple servants, to the number of 42,360 (or, if this number stands for heads of families, about 200,000 in all), set out under Zerubbabel or Sheshbazzar (compare Ezra i. 8, ii. 2, and v. 14), to whom, by the king's command, were delivered the sacred vessels of the Temple, which had been carried away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezra i., ii.). The exiles were accompanied by Joshua, the high priest; and, in the seventh month of the year of their return, they set up an altar for burnt offering and celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles.

From that time onwards the observance of the prescribed rites of their religion was maintained; but it was not till the second year that the foundations of the Temple were laid, amid the joyful shouts of the younger colonists and the weeping of older men who had seen the former Temple (chapter iii.). Their work, however, was not allowed to proceed in peace. "The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin," that is to say, the inhabitants of Samaria, a mixed people who had been settled in the old territory of the kingdom of the ten tribes,* approached Zerubbabel and his colonists, asking to have a share in the building of the Temple, seeing that they also had been worshippers of the same God from the days of Esar-haddon. Their offers were rejected, and from that time began the bitter hostility of the Samaritans to the Jews, which lasted down to New Testament times (John iv. 9). The Samaritans had many opportunities of venting their hatred. Their own city, Samaria, was by that time a place of some importance, with a Persian governor, through whom they could send reports to headquarters, representing in a bad light the intentions of the Jews in setting up their Temple at Jerusalem; they could, moreover, encourage the marauding Arabs of the neighbourhood to engage in petty annoyances or warlike attacks on the infant colony. In one way or another they impeded the progress of the work till the reign of Darius (Ezra iv. 1—5).

Between the death of Cyrus and the accession of Darius there intervened a space of about eight years, represented by the reign of Cambyses, son of Cyrus, and the brief usurpation of the so-called Pseudo-Smerdis. Some have thought that these are the kings referred to in Ezra iv. 6, 7, under the names of Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes. It is pretty certain, however, that the names stand for Xerxes I. and Artaxerxes I., who were the successors of Darius, and that the verses 6—23 do not follow the preceding narrative in strictly chronological order, but were sug-

* See 2 Kings xvii. 24—41, written, it will be remembered, at least not earlier than the closing days of the old kingdom of Judah, and possibly even after the Captivity. Compare Kings, § 1, p. 92.

gested to the author (or editor) by the subject in hand. Having stated that the opposition lasted till the time of Darius, he adds that it was continued even later, and proceeds to give instances of how it manifested itself; but in verse 24 he returns to the point to which he had come, at which a temporary change in the circumstances of the colony took place.* In the second year of Darius, he proceeds to say, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah urged the people to a more vigorous prosecution of the work; and under their impulse the building was resumed.

It was a time when the great Persian empire was shaken to its base, and Darius was making tremendous efforts to retain the sovereignty over revolted provinces; and it may have been thought that, at such a time, the king's attention would not be turned to the operations of the little colony at Jerusalem, and that the work would be allowed to proceed in peace. But the enemies of Judah were on the watch; and no doubt it was at their instigation that Tattenai, the Persian satrap of Syria, demanded from the Jews a proof of the authority by which they were carrying on their work. The Jews referred him to the edict of Cyrus; and while correspondence was going on between him and the court of Darius to verify their statement, we may believe they would continue to push on the work of building (chapter v.). At all events, Darius, now at rest from his enemies, made search for the old edict, found it, and confirmed it, giving orders to his governors to aid the Jews in their work. And thus, in the sixth year of his reign, the Temple was finished, a joyful feast was held at the dedication, and the Passover was observed in the same month (chapter vi.).

3. *Second Period.*—The second period begins with the seventh chapter of Ezra, and extends to the close of the book. These chapters will tell us how Ezra brought the second colony from Babylon and settled them in Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes I., called Longimanus, *i.e.* in the year B.C. 458 (Ezra vii. 8). Since the former period ended with the sixth year of Darius, or 515, and this begins with the seventh year of Artaxerxes, there is thus an interval of fifty-seven years passed over without record. This space represents the remaining thirty years of Darius, the twenty years' reign of Xerxes, and the opening seven years of that of Artaxerxes. As has been stated in the last paragraph, the passage Ezra iv. 6—23 is best explained as referring to this interval. Verse 6 simply says that, in the reign of Ahasuerus (Xerxes), in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the Jews, but the verses that follow

* Observe that, on this view, the verse Ezra vi. 14 must also be regarded as an anticipation of the succeeding history.

give at length a correspondence that took place “in the days of Artaxerxes” between the local governors* and the court of Persia. The complaint then made was that the Jews were “building the rebellious city and had finished the walls,” the insinuation being that they were aiming at independence; and the result of the correspondence was that the works were stopped till a positive decree should be issued on the subject.

We may either place the episode before the arrival of Ezra, and suppose that the exiles, taking encouragement in the early years of Artaxerxes, pushed on the work, and that the decree referred to was a favourable one, and was virtually the commission to Ezra himself. Or we may put it down later than Ezra’s arrival, in which case it would be the reforming impulse which he gave which led to the intervention of the adversaries, and the stoppage would have occurred some time before the arrival of Nehemiah. For it is to be remembered that though Ezra reached Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, and Nehemiah does not appear till the twentieth year of the same reign, all the events recorded in Ezra viii.—x. in connection with his coming seem to have occurred in the space of a few months; so that for nearly thirteen years Ezra disappears from the narrative, although he may have been present at Jerusalem.

However this may be, it was in the seventh year of Artaxerxes that he obtained permission to lead a second colony, and was not only provided with such free-will offerings as the Jews might contribute, but received also a gift from the royal treasury, and orders to local governors to give him every support (vii.). Collecting his volunteers at the river Ahava, he discovered that there were no Levites among them, and persuaded some from Casiphia to accompany him; and then, after solemn fasting and prayer, set out on his journey. Though the condition of the empire rendered travelling dangerous, Ezra had no armed escort, having been ashamed to ask such protection after confidently saying to the king that the hand of God would be upon them for good. The journey occupied four months, and the caravan reached Jerusalem in safety (Ezra viii. 1—32; comp. vii. 8—10).

Delivering his credentials to the governors and handing to the priests the offerings for the house of God (viii. 33—36), Ezra proceeded to execute the charge entrusted to him, “to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of thy

* Mithredath and Tabeel were probably the Persian satrap of Syria and his secretary, and Rehum and Shimshai the governor of Samaria and his secretary. The accusation would be stronger when presented by the two parties. The name Bishlam is uncertain; the Septuagint and Syrian versions translate the word “in peace.”

God which is in thine hand" (vii. 14). The condition of matters was even worse than he had expected, for when he heard that the people, and even the priests and Levites, had contracted mixed marriages and conformed to heathen customs, he "sat down astonished till the evening sacrifice" (ix. 1—3). He then rose and, in the hearing of the people, poured out a touching confession of the sins of the nation (ix. 5—15); which so moved the hearts of the people that some of the leaders entreated him to take measures for cleansing the community, binding themselves by oath to put away their heathen wives. An assembly was convened in the cold, rainy weather of November, at which it was agreed that a commission should search out all the cases of trespass, and in two months they had completed their task (x. 1—17). The Book of Ezra closes abruptly with a list of those who had offended and who pledged themselves to put away their strange wives (x. 18—44).

4. *Third Period.*—Thirteen years after the arrival of Ezra's colony Nehemiah appears at Jerusalem; and the *third* period, treated of in the Book of Nehemiah, and extending over twelve years, is the period of their joint activity. In the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah, cup-bearer to the king, having heard mournful accounts of the condition of his countrymen in Judea (chapter i.), obtained leave of absence from the court, and was appointed governor of Jerusalem. He travelled with a royal escort and was provided with letters to officials by the way, as well as orders to the keeper of the royal parks to furnish him with timber for building purposes; all of which gave great displeasure to the unfriendly neighbours of the Jews, Sanballat, the Samaritan governor, and his secretary Tobiah (ii. 1—10). Unmoved by the contempt of these men, Nehemiah, as soon as he had made an inspection of the ruins, took in hand the repair of the walls, dividing the work among the various chiefs and guilds, who vigorously lent their aid (ii. 11—iii. 32).

The adversaries, seeing the progress of the work, planned an attack upon the city by the help of the Ammonites and Arabians; but, by keeping his men under arms and labouring incessantly, Nehemiah was able to proceed without interruption (iv.). At the same time he attended to the wants of the poor, and made great sacrifices on their behalf (v.). The walls were completed in fifty-two days, and then Sanballat and his associates laid various snares to entrap the governor, being aided in their designs by certain false prophets in Jerusalem itself. All these machinations Nehemiah eluded (vi.), and, having seen his work completed, he appointed faithful men over the city with special instructions to keep the gates (vi. 1—5). About a week after

this, in the beginning of the seventh month, Ezra again appears.

At a great public assembly he reads the law to the people, being supported on the right and left by priests, and attended by Levites who explain what is read, the service being continued from early morn till mid-day, and the day observed as a time of holy joy (viii. 1—12). This was followed by a great observance of the Feast of Tabernacles, during the continuance of which there was a similar daily reading of the law (viii. 13—18); and then “the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers” (ix. 1—3), and bound themselves by a solemn covenant to keep the law, and particularly to abstain from mixed marriages, to sanctify the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbatical year, and to tax themselves for the maintenance of the Temple worship (ix. 4—x. 39). Measures were then taken for gathering into the city a sufficient population from the surrounding country (xi.), and the completed walls were dedicated by a solemn procession (xii.). Nehemiah, however, was recalled to the court of Persia in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes (xiii. 6), and returning after an absence of some undefined time, found that the old abuses had again crept in, the chief offender being the high priest himself, whose name is significantly absent from the list of those who had signed the covenant twelve years before (x. 1—28).

It appears that he was related by marriage to Sanballat (xiii. 28), and that he had actually assigned to Tobiah, Sanballat's associate, a chamber in the Temple which should have been appropriated to sacred purposes. The governor, enraged at the profanation, cast forth the household stuff of Tobiah, cleansed the chamber, recalled the Levites who had been driven to live on their lands outside the city, and appointed treasurers to look after the payment of tithes in future (xiii. 1—14). The book comes to rather an abrupt close while Nehemiah is still engaged in such works of reformation, its last words being his oft-repeated prayer: “Remember me, O my God, for good” (xiii. 23—31).

5. *Literary Features.*—Looked at as literary compositions these books present features which prove they could not, in their present form, have been written by the men whose names they bear. Certain portions of both books are written in the first person,* Ezra and Nehemiah being presumably the authors, while in other parts these men are spoken of in the third person, as if by another writer. Since the narrative in Ezra begins at a point some eighty years before his arrival in Jerusalem, if Ezra

* Viz. Ezra vii. 27—ix. 15; Nehemiah i.—vii.; xii. 27—43; xiii. 4—31.

composed it, he must have depended upon written materials for his information, and it will be observed that about two-thirds of the section i.—vi. is made up of official lists and state documents.

Again in the Book of Nehemiah, while he obviously is the author of the opening and closing portions, and while some of the lists may have been drawn up by himself or in his own days, other lists are older (as that given in vii. 6—73, which is a duplicate of Ezra ii. 2—70), and some come down to a period long posterior to Nehemiah. In chapter xii. 26, the times of Ezra and Nehemiah are spoken of as past; in xii. 10, 11, the lists of high priests is brought down to Jaddua, who, according to Josephus, was a contemporary of Alexander the Great, in other words, was about a century later than Nehemiah; and verse 22 of the same chapter, referring to the same time, names Darius *the Persian*, as if by that time the Persian empire had passed away, the king referred to being most probably Darius Codomannus, the last Persian king (B.C. 336—331). The last writer who touched the books, therefore, whether he only introduced the brief notices that have been instanced, or made a more extensive compilation, must have lived as late as the time of the Greek domination. He may have been the same person who composed the Books of Chronicles, which are later in date than the times of Ezra and Nehemiah.*

Many indeed hold that the three books, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, constituted originally one large work, and in proof of this it is pointed out that Chronicles has no proper termination, but breaks off in the middle of a sentence, which is completed in Ezra. But, on the other hand, it may be maintained that the verses common to the two books stand more naturally at the opening of Ezra, and that their presence in Chronicles is more intelligible on the supposition that the Book of Ezra already existed. Moreover, the advocates of this theory can give no satisfactory account of the separation of the large work into three, and the inversion of the parts into what is not a chronological order. Further, there are repetitions in the books which are scarcely consistent with the idea that they once formed a whole. Thus the list in Ezra ii. 2—70, is repeated in Nehemiah vii. 6—73, and the list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem after the restoration, which has its natural place in Nehemiah xi., is found also, with variations such as the same author would hardly have introduced, in 1 Chron. ix.

On the whole it seems most natural to suppose that materials

* See the Books of Chronicles, § 1, p. 110, and § 7, p. 118.

from the hands of Ezra and Nehemiah respectively formed a nucleus, around which the two books which have come to bear their names grew into their present form, and it may have been the author of the Books of Chronicles who gave them their definite shape.

6. *The New Reform.*—Little as we are told of the personal histories of Ezra and Nehemiah, we perceive that they were eminently fitted for the crisis in which they appeared. It is evident that the efforts of the first colony under Zerubbabel and Joshua sufficed at most to preserve a lingering existence. It was only after the arrival of Ezra that the restored community took a new departure, and only by the energetic action of Nehemiah that it assumed a position in which it was able to unfold, under new conditions, its old religious life. It has been conjectured that probably the influence of Esther and Mordecai on Xerxes, the predecessor of Artaxerxes,* may account for Jews being in such high regard at the court.

It is clear that both Ezra and Nehemiah were in high estimation with the king, or they would not have been entrusted with the functions they were sent to perform; and it was providential that, at a time when the first colony was struggling for existence, these two men, of the seed of Israel, were raised up to guide their nation through a trying time and give it a constitution which would survive the successive dynasties under which the Jewish people lived. Ezra, a scribe, instructed in the law of Moses, was able to expound the principles of the religion, and to show their application to daily life: Nehemiah, endued with full powers from the king, was a man of determined will, fertility of resource, and devotion to his people. And thus, at a crisis which became a reformation in Israel, the leaders possessed the intelligent conception of the thing needed, and the administrative capacity to effect it, without which no reformation can be brought about.

So it is from this period that a new era in the life of the Jewish people is dated, and tradition assigns to Ezra a place next to Moses in the moulding of the religious life. The national unity was saved from being shattered into fragments by the Captivity; for the Temple with its service was the religious centre to which in all places of their wanderings the dispersed ever turned. Even though many remained in Babylon, and entered upon a new religious and intellectual career in the famous schools which arose there, though others in other lands fell under the spell of the Greek philosophy, yet in all places of their dis-

* See the Book of Esther, § 2, p. 132.

persian they looked to Jerusalem as their metropolis, and all their mental activity had one starting point, and can be traced to the movement inaugurated by Ezra.

7. *Restoration of the Law*.—In an account of the great gathering in the seventh month, contained in Nehemiah viii., ix., the thing that is most remarkable is the extraordinary desire of the people to become acquainted with the books which the scribe read in their hearing. We see Ezra attended by a number of men who, like himself, must have given special study to the law, for they “caused the people to understand” (viii. 7); and for three hours on end the people stood listening to the reading, and for as many hours more engaged in worship (ix. 3). As at the Reformation in Europe preaching became a distinctive feature of the new religious life, so here for the first time a pulpit is mentioned (viii. 4), and the regular exposition of Scripture commences. It is this prominence given to Scripture that distinguishes the reform of Ezra, and accounts for the high honour assigned to him in later tradition.

Whatever may be the amount of truth underlying the tradition which calls him the restorer of the law, it is clear that from this time a special value was set upon the sacred writings, and that the study of Scripture and the work of the “Scribe” became new features in the religious history. It was a necessity of the time that, of all the sacred writings, the “law,” prescribing a regular ritual of worship, and requiring a distinctive life, should receive special attention at the crisis when a sharp separation had to be drawn between the colony at Jerusalem and the surrounding heathen. And, since the maintaining of that separation was a continuous and arduous process, and, in the absence of national independence, the religious observances of the law became the visible mark of the separation, it came to pass naturally that Legalism and Rabbinism ultimately set in, giving to Judaism the hardness and formalism which it presented, till such time as the world was ready for the free dissemination of the truth of which the nation was the depository. But, while the impulse towards Legalism was thus given in the movement inaugurated by Ezra, there is nothing in the books under consideration to warrant the conclusion of advanced critics that the Book of the Law from which he read was in any proper sense his own composition, or that he was the author of the Levitical Code.

Those colonists did not leave comfortable homes in Babylon to set up a Temple at Jerusalem whose ritual had, in their estimation, anything short of a Divine sanction. Ezra brings forth the book, and the people receive it, as the law of Moses, the ancient constitution of the nation which they had sacrificed so

much to restore ; and the modern theory gives no adequate explanation of this deeply-rooted national belief. Ezra is a restorer, not an innovator. And although the high regard to Scripture which he inaugurated degenerated into a slavish worship of the letter, and the attention to the legal element ran into extravagance, it is the great merit of him and his associates that, at a critical time, they preserved the ancient writings which show how from earliest times the people of Israel had been the channel of the revelation of God's will to mankind, and rallied around these writings the wondrous people that has been from age to age the witness of God's truth to the world.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

1. *Title and Place in the Canon.*—The Book of Esther stands in the English Bible at the close of the historical books ; it does not, however, form a link in the connected series, as it only relates to an episode in the history. It has, moreover, features of its own which distinguish it broadly from the historical books, and indeed from all the other books of the Old Testament. It takes its name from the Jewish maiden who became queen of the Persian king Ahasuerus, and it was written doubtless with the primary purpose of explaining the institution of the feast of Purim, which originated mainly through her means. In the Hebrew Bible it stands among the Hagiographa, the third division of the canonical books, as one of the five rolls,* and by the later Jews has come to be esteemed almost as highly as the law itself.

Its authorship and date are unknown ; but from the indication in the first verse of the time at which the events to be narrated took place, we may conclude that it could not have been written till a considerable time after the close of the reign of Ahasuerus. This king is now generally believed to have been Xerxes (named

* The number of books in the Old Testament is reckoned by the Jews as twenty-four, divided into three collections, Law, Prophets, and (Sacred) Writings or Hagiographa. The number twenty four is made up as follows :—

I.	The law, <i>viz.</i> , Genesis to Deuteronomy	5 books
II.	The <i>former</i> prophets—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings	4 "
	The <i>latter</i> prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets counted as one	4 "
III.	The three so-called poetical books—Psalms, Proverbs, Job	3 "
	The five rolls—Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther	5 "
	The three books, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles	3 "
	In all	24 ,,"
	x 2	

in the Persian inscriptions Kshyarsha), who succeeded Darius on the throne of Persia in 485 B.C., and reigned twenty years.* The composition of the book may with some probability be placed not earlier at least than that of the Books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, *i.e.* towards the close of the Persian or in the early part of the Greek domination.†

2. *Contents.*—Though attempts have been made to resolve the Book of Esther into different constituent parts, it presents itself most naturally as one composition. It is graphic in its delineation of details, and the plot of the story is unfolded with almost dramatic vividness. Ahasuerus, the powerful king of Persia, at a great feast in the third year of his reign, being heated with wine and elated with pride, repudiates his queen Vashti for refusing to obey his foolish command; and in the seventh year of his reign the orphan Jewess Hadassah (*Myrtle*), who had been brought up by her kinsman Mordecai, a Benjamite, is chosen for her beauty and demeanour to take the place of the repudiated queen, receiving apparently the Persian name Esther (*Star*).

Mordecai, who may have been in court employment, and had rendered special service to the state by the discovery of a plot against the king's life, wounds the pride of Haman, the king's minister and favourite, by refusing to stand up and do him honour in the king's gate. At this Haman conceives a bitter hatred for the whole race of the Jews, and forms a plan for their extermination. Finding, by the employment of the lot (*pur*), an auspicious day for the accomplishment of his purpose, he prevails upon the king to issue an edict that, in all parts of his dominions, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, or Adar, the whole race of the Jews, "both young and old, little children and women," should be put to death. Mordecai communicates intelligence of the plot to Esther, imploring her to use her influence with the king to save her people from destruction. She resolves to risk her life in the attempt, and prepares for the execution of her purpose by a fast, in which the Jews of Susa, the capital, join her.

Venturing into the royal presence she invites the king and Haman to a banquet, at which, being pressed by the king to prefer her request, she invites them to another banquet on the following day. Haman goes home boasting to his friends of the honour done to him, and, confident of the success of his scheme, prepares a gallows for the execution of Mordecai. The same night, however, the king, unable to sleep, has the registers of the kingdom read to him, and is reminded of the former service

* See Ezra and Nehemiah, §§ 2, 3, pp. 121—5.

† Chronicles, § 1, p. 110; Ezra and Nehemiah, § 5, pp. 126, 127.

of Mordecai, which had never been publicly acknowledged. Next day, when Haman presents himself, the king, still thinking of Mordecai's service, puts the question, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honour?" and Haman, flattering himself that a distinction is to be conferred on himself, suggests a pompous procession and a royal proclamation. To his mortification he is ordered to carry out his own programme in honour of Mordecai; and, coming in to the banquet after his degrading task, he is denounced by Esther as the enemy of her people, and is immediately hurried away to be executed on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai.

An edict is then despatched, empowering the Jews, in all places of the empire, to stand for their defence on the day appointed for their massacre; and on that day, and in Susa the capital on the succeeding day also, they take up arms and inflict a bloody vengeance on their enemies, celebrating their success in a general rejoicing. Thus, it is explained, originated the feast of Purim, or *lots*, to commemorate the deliverance of the Jewish nation from the ruin which Haman had cast lots to compass; and Esther and Mordecai ordained that besides the two days of rejoicing, a day of fasting and mourning should be observed as part of the celebration.

3. *Historical Character.*—The truth of the story told in this Book of Esther is attested by the subsistence of the feast of Purim among the Jews to the present day. Without some such great national occurrence as is here related, the introduction of such a feast and its observance by the whole race cannot be explained. In the Second Book of Maccabees it is already spoken of as "the day of Mordecai," and Josephus also refers to it. No other satisfactory account can be given of its origin than that contained in this book; and the appeal of the writer to the "book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia" (x. 2) implies that the occurrence was one of public notoriety.

It has been objected that the narrative contains historical improbabilities, and that the writer betrays ignorance of the customs of the Persian court; but in these respects the credibility of the writer is confirmed and not shaken by more perfect knowledge. The time at which the events are said to have occurred was eminently opportune; for the great gathering of princes and nobles at Susa in the third year of the reign of Xerxes would agree with the mustering of his forces before undertaking the war with Greece, and the blank that is left till his seventh year covers the time of that disastrous expedition. All that is here related of Ahasuerus is in keeping with his character as described in history. He was capricious in temper, extravagant in his

habits, overweening in pride, and much under the influence of court favourites, male and female.

From Persian authors nothing can be learned regarding this king's life after the sixth year of his reign, and Greek writers who treat of his times concern themselves with the public events bearing on the history of their own country; so that the Book of Esther, giving a glimpse of his domestic life, does not receive direct confirmation from these sources. The details which it furnishes are, however, in keeping with all that we otherwise know; and the minute carefulness in such matters as lists of names, and the accuracy of the particulars as to the usages of the court of Persia are proof that the writer was not drawing upon his fancy, and are in marked contrast with the inaccuracies of certain of the apocryphal books. Though, of course, we must recognise the spirit of a Jewish writer in recording the signal deliverance of his nation, there is, on the whole, no reason to doubt the accuracy of the account which he gives of the occurrences.

4. *Religious Significance.*—A book which has for its object to record the triumph of the Jewish people over their heathen enemies was bound to be received by them with unusual favour. There were not wanting those among them at an early time who discountenanced the spirit in which the feast of Purim was observed, and presumably objected to the tendency of the book; yet the people, as a whole, becoming more exclusive as their separation from the world became more marked, magnified the feast and gave corresponding respect to the book which relates its institution.

But in proportion as the Jews esteemed the Book of Esther, and for the very reasons that enhanced its value in their esteem, Christian writers depreciated it, and hesitated to accept it as part of canonical Scripture. Luther plainly gave it as his opinion that it would be better excluded from the Canon, and said of it and the Second Book of Maccabees that he would gladly wish they had never been written. The objection taken by him and others to the book is that it *judaizes* too much, some even say that it breathes a spirit of pride and revenge. There is no doubt that the tone of the book is very different from that of the older Hebrew writings, and little is said of the Divine providence in the events recorded. The king of Persia is mentioned some one hundred and eighty-seven times, while, as has been often remarked, the name of God does not once occur.

On the other hand, there are valuable moral lessons in the book; the conduct of Esther and Mordecai would be inexplicable without a belief on their part in God's providence, and a reliance on His power and faithfulness; and the cause of the quarrel

between Haman and Mordecai was the scrupulous regard of the latter for his own religion. We are not to expect the high spirit of Christianity in a book written at the time and amid the circumstances in which the Book of Esther was produced. We already see in the Books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, the beginning of the tendency to Rabbinic legalism; and the book before us in like manner bears traces of the process by which the Jewish people, deprived of the guidance of prophecy and no longer politically independent, passed into that narrow exclusiveness which marked the later Judaism. What Haman urged against the Jews of his day, that "their laws are diverse from all people" (iii. 8), became more and more their boast and pride; and so, instead of celebrating Purim with humble thankfulness for national preservation, they came to make it a time of unseemly revelry and a commemoration of pride and conceit. Nevertheless, we need not disparage the Book of Esther, which in its graphic narrative relates the wonderful preservation from ruin of a people who were destined to a position of which they were unconscious and unworthy.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

1. THE Book of Job is so called from the name of the man whose history forms the subject of it. It consists of five parts.

The Prologue (chap. i.—ii.).—This introduces to us a man named Job, living in the Land of Uz, and describes in rapid touches his piety and wealth and the extraordinary calamities that befell him. The man was “perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil,” and his piety was reflected in the great prosperity that attended him. Then the narrative describes how the disinterestedness of Job’s piety was called in question in the council of heaven by the Adversary. This angel insinuated that Job’s religion was insincere, and that if the blessings showered on him by God were withdrawn he would disown God to His face. Satan receives permission to afflict Job, with the reservation that he must not touch him in his person.

In one day the man is stripped of all his possessions and bereaved of his children. Job manifests the liveliest tokens of grief, but his reverent submission to God remains unshaken. “In all this Job sinned not nor ascribed wrong to God” (ch. i.). Again the heavenly council convenes and again the Lord speaks of his servant Job with approval, and upbraids the Adversary for instigating Him to bring undeserved affliction upon him. Satan’s answer is ready: the trial did not touch Job close enough; let God touch him in his own bone and flesh and he would disown Him to His face. The Adversary receives permission to afflict Job himself, with the reservation that he shall spare his life. Straightway Job is smitten with sore boils, the leprosy called elephantiasis. His deeper afflictions only reveal greater deeps in Job’s reverent piety. “We receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not also receive evil?” (ch. ii.)

Then the narrative informs us how Job’s three friends, having heard of his calamities, come to condole with him. They are struck dumb at the sight of his great afflictions. Moved by the sympathising presence of his friends, Job loses his self-control and breaks out into a passionate cry for death (iii).

2. *The Debate between Job and his Friends* (chap. iv.—xxxi. (as also chap. iii.), written in poetry).—This part comprises a series of speeches in which the problem of Job's afflictions and the relation of evil or suffering to the righteousness of God and the conduct of men is discussed. The theory of the friends is that affliction implies previous sin on the part of the sufferer, though in the case of a good man such as Job it is meant to wean him from evil still clinging to him; they therefore exhort him to repentance, and hold up a bright future before him. Job replies that his sufferings are due to sin, of which he is innocent; God wrongly holds him guilty and afflicts him. And, taught by his own history to survey the course of providence in the world more closely, he fails to perceive that inseparable connection between sin and suffering which the three friends insisted on; the providence of God is not, in fact, administered on such a principle. Job agreed with his friends in holding that providence *ought* to be so conducted; hence he missed the righteousness of God in the rule of the world, and this threw his mind into the greatest perplexity regarding God, and tempted him to disown Him, as Satan had predicted he would do.

The discussion between Job and his friends consists of three circles of speeches: (i.) chap. iv.—xiv.; (ii.) chap. xv.—xxi.; (iii.) chap. xxii.—xxxi. Each of these circles comprises six speeches, one by each of the friends, with a reply from Job. In the last round, however, the third disputant, Zophar, fails to speak. This is a confession of defeat; and Job, left victor in the strife, resumes his parable and carries it through a series of chapters, in which, with a profound pathos, he contrasts his former greatness with his present humiliation, protests before heaven his innocence of all offences, and adjures God to reveal to him the cause of his afflictions (chap. xxiv.—xxxi.).

3. *The Speeches of Elihu* (chap. xxxii.—xxxvii.).—A youthful bystander named Elihu, who hitherto had been a silent listener to the debate, here intervenes, not without manifold apologies for presuming to speak in the presence of such aged and wise counsellors. He is dissatisfied both with Job and his friends. He is shocked at the charges of unrighteousness brought by the former against God, and indignant with the three friends because they have failed to answer Job and show him to be in the wrong. His object in speaking is “to give right to his Maker,” and in a long discourse he expresses his abhorrence of Job's sentiments, controverts his views on God's providence and the meaning of afflictions, and insists more than the friends had done that afflictions proceed from the goodness of God, who by their means seeks to wean men from evil (chap. xxxiii. 29, 30; xxxvi. 8—10).

4. *The Speeches of the Lord out of the Storm* (chap. xxxviii.—

xlii. 6).—In reply to Job's repeated demand that God would appear and solve the riddle of his sufferings, the Lord answers him out of the storm. The answer is altogether unlike what Job had expected. The speaker does not condescend to refer to Job's individual problem. The intellectual solution of problems can never be the question between God and His servants; He requires from them submission and trust even amidst intellectual darkness, and it is only a deeper sense of what He is that can produce this, and this deeper sense He awakens in Job's mind. In a series of splendid pictures from the material creation and from animal life He makes all the glory of His being to pass before Job. The sufferer is humbled, and lays his hand upon his mouth. Such thoughts of God had never before filled his heart; his former knowledge of Him was like that learned from hearsay. Now his eye saw Him, and he repented his former words in dust and ashes (chap. xl. 4; xlii. 5).

5. *The Epilogue*, also prose (chap. xlvi. 7—17).—This describes how Job, having humbled himself before God, and risen to a higher knowledge of Him, is restored to a prosperity double that which he enjoyed before; his former friends again gather round him; he is anew blessed with children, and dies old and full of days. With the exception of the discourses of Elihu, the connection of which with the poem in its original form may be liable to doubt, all these five parts appear original elements of the work as it came from the hand of the author, though it is possible that there might be slight additions in the second and fourth divisions.

6. The kind of literary composition to which the Book of Job belongs has been a subject of discussion both in ancient and modern times. Some have held that the book was historical in all its parts, that the events narrated happened as they are described, and that the speeches of Job and his friends were spoken as we have them. Others have maintained that the book was a simple creation of the author's mind, with no historical foundation, being a didactic poem. While a third view is that, though mainly a creation of the author's mind, the poem embodies an historical tradition, which the writer made use of as suitable for his moral purpose.

Among the Jews in early times the opinion seems to have been general that the book was historical. Some scholars, however, held a different view. In the Talmud (A.D. 450) a rabbi is alluded to who had said, "A Job existed not, and was not created; he is a parable." And the great Rabbi Maimonides (died 1204) advocated the opinion that "Job is a parable, meant to exhibit the views of mankind in regard to Providence." In the Christian

Church also the prevailing view was to the effect that the book was historical. Luther, however, while admitting an historical basis, considered that the facts had been poetically treated. In his "Table Talk" he says, "I hold the Book of Job to be real history; but that everything so happened and was so done I do not believe, but think that some ingenious, pious, and learned man composed it as it is." This view, however, did not commend itself to other Protestant writers, who thought such an opinion scarcely reconcileable with just views of Scripture. Fred. Spanheim, in his "History of Job" (1670), maintained that "Job, if it be not history, is a fraud of the writer." Such a judgment would condemn as frauds not only the majority of modern compositions, but the dramatic and parabolic writings of all ages.

Happily a juster and wider conception of the nature of Scripture now prevails, and we are prepared to find in it any form of composition which it is natural for men to employ, and which may be effective for its moral purpose and fitted to influence the minds of men. The general view in modern times coincides with that of Luther, that the book reposes on an historical tradition, which the author has used and embellished, and made the vehicle for conveying the moral instruction which it was his object to teach. There are still some scholars, however, who regard the book as a truly poetical creation, and this view is held even by writers of the most conservative opinions in regard to Scripture, such as Hengstenberg.

7. There are several things which show that the book is not literal history, *e.g.* the views of the heavenly council given in the prologue (chap. i. ii.; comp. 1 Kings xxii. 19), and the long addresses put into the mouth of the Lord (chap. xxxviii.—xlii.); the symbolical numbers three and seven used to describe Job's flocks and his children (i. 2, 3,), and the fact that his possessions are exactly doubled to him on his restoration, while he again receives seven sons and three daughters, precisely as before (xlvi. 12, 13). The description of the incidence of his calamities, too, is dramatic and ideal (i. 13. *seq.*), while the profound thought and highly-wrought imagery in the speeches of Job and his friends show that, so far from being the extemporaneous utterances of three or four persons casually brought together, they are the elaborate and leisurely production of a writer of the highest genius.

On the other hand, it is not quite probable that the book is a purely poetical invention. The allusion in Ezekiel (chap. xiv. 14) can hardly be to our present book, but rather to a tradition which represented Job as a man famed for piety in ancient times. And it is the manner of Hebrew writers to attach their

works to the name of some great personage of former times, as the author of Ecclesiastes makes Solomon the living embodiment of the wisdom which he describes. It is probable, therefore, that the writer of Job, having a moral purpose in view, revived a tradition slumbering in the minds of the people, finding it suitable to his design and more likely to interest men because not altogether unfamiliar to them. Naturally it is not possible to decide now what precise elements belonged to the tradition. A story could scarcely exist which did not contain the name of the hero, and the name "Job" is no doubt historical. In all probability the tradition included Job's great prosperity and power, his unparalleled and inexplicable sufferings, and possibly also his restoration; probably, too, the fact that the mystery of his sufferings engaged the attention of the wise men of his country and formed the subject of discussion. It might be that Uz, the country of Job, and the names of his three friends, and the story of his wife, belonged to the tradition, though this is less certain.

The book has been called an epic by some, by others a drama, more particularly a tragedy, and by others still a didactic poem. That the poem has a didactic purpose is undeniable. It is equally evident that it contains many elements of the drama, such as dialogue, and a plot with an entanglement, development, and solution. Much in the action may rightly be called tragic, but the happy conclusion is at variance with the conception of a proper tragedy. Any idea of representing his work on a stage never crossed the author's mind; his object was to instruct his countrymen, to sustain their faith in God, and inspire them with hope in the future. Though the book cannot be called a drama, it is certainly dramatic. The action, however, is internal and mental, being the varying moods of a great soul struggling with the mysteries of its fate, and not trying external situations. This action is really the thing of interest in the book, because through it the answer is worked out to the prediction of the Adversary, "He will disown thee to thy face." This prediction is falsified. Job, though he falls into sin in the course of the debate with his friends, continues to cling to his faith in God, which becomes stronger as the dispute proceeds, until finally his mind regains its peace through the appearance and words of the Lord.

The Meaning of the Book.—It has been found very difficult to dispose all the parts of the book under a single conception, and some writers have contented themselves with stating a few of the more prominent truths which it teaches. The prologue, for instance, shows that even pious men may be visited with severe afflictions, which it is wrong to consider due to special sins on their part, or to regard as signs of God's displeasure; they may

be rather permitted by God in order to try the pious mind, and to elevate it through the trial to a higher degree of godliness. Again, the impatience of Job under his afflictions, and his impugning of the righteousness of God, teach us that it is presumption in man thus to seek to call God to give an account of His doings, seeing the providence of God is beyond the mind of man to fathom, whose true wisdom is to fear the Lord and eschew evil; while the final history of Job, his restoration and peace, shows that God will at last deliver the pious sufferer if he perseveres in his righteousness, or if, having fallen into sinful murmuring under his sufferings, he repents of his evil.

These are all great truths clearly taught in the book; it is probable, however, that some more definite and single lesson is to be discovered in it. The books of Scripture have generally a practical aim, explainable from the circumstances of the time at which they were written, and they have usually the public design of instructing or consoling the people, or of sustaining their faith and hope amidst their trials. The Book of Job was evidently written during a time of great distress, and though it be the sufferings of an individual that are described, the sufferer must be held to be a type of the pious sufferers of his time, or even of the suffering nation of Israel. The disasters of the Exile and the prolonged miseries which followed it, were felt to be due to the sins of the people, and when the nation as a whole was considered, this was the true explanation. Yet there were many pious individuals in the nation on whom great calamities had fallen because they were involved in the sins of others. Their sufferings were due to sins of which they had not themselves been guilty, the sins of those before them or those around them.

This singular fact, when reflected on, became a fruitful source of profound religious thoughts. When the fact that the godly suffered for the offences of the unjust and rebellious was coupled with the other fact, or with the hope that by the perseverance and the efforts of these godly sufferers transgressors would be converted from their evil and restored, there was a step taken towards a doctrine of vicarious suffering. On the other hand, the feeling of the righteous that they were suffering because of the sins of those before them would be apt to lie upon them with a crushing weight, paralyzing all individual effort. They expressed this feeling by saying, "The fathers ate sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge," and prophets like Ezekiel contend against such a state of mind, and endeavour to free men from the shackles of this belief, and to impress on them the truth of individual responsibility to God (Ezek. xviii. 2).

Naturally, when the false exaggerations of the doctrine that

the sins of the fathers were visited on the children had begun to be overcome, and the truth acquired clearness that God's dealings with each man and with each generation of men bore immediately on their own conduct, and were directed towards their own good, the question arose, What is God's providential purpose in the sufferings of the righteous? And this is the question to which the answer is given in the Book of Job. The answer is not a universal or a conclusive one, it is merely one for the circumstances of the time, an answer additional to other answers already known; and the answer is, that the sufferings of the righteous may be a trial of their faith, which, if successfully borne, will yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and lift them up into fuller knowledge of God and more assured peace.

This truth is taught directly by the author of the book in the prologue (chap. i. ii.), and it is illustrated in the history which Job's mind passes through as reflected in the debate with his friends, and finally as instructed by God. The debate of Job with his friends regarding the meaning of evil contributes nothing positively, but it shows that the old views advocated by the friends are untenable, and thus clears the foundation on which the writer erects his own principle. Both Job and his friends come to the discussion of the question of Job's afflictions, ignorant of the true meaning of his sufferings as disclosed to us in the prologue. The three friends come armed with the old belief that wherever there is great suffering there must have been great sin in the sufferer to account for it. Afflictions from the hand of God, however, are not meant to destroy him, but to arrest him in his evil way; and they earnestly exhort Job to lay his chastisement to heart and seek unto God, promising him a future more brilliant and blessed than his past. Job agreed with the three friends in the belief that sufferings from the hand of God came on none but on those whom He held guilty of having greatly sinned; hence, conscious of his innocence, he concluded that God held him guilty wrongly and was become his enemy.

Hence he has a double conflict to maintain: first, the merely dialectic one against his friends; and secondly, the far more profoundly agitating one with God, which calls forth the deepest religious emotions and the loftiest aspirations of his heart. The contention of his friends he is able to refute on both its sides. They insisted that sufferings were experienced only where there had been sin. Job meets this on one side with his own case, a man suffering though innocent; and, on the other side, he points to many a wicked man whose life is prosperous and his death

easy, whose bier is followed in honour to the grave, and on whose dust the clods of the valley lie softly. When the author allows Job thus to refute the belief of the invariable connection of suffering with sin, we may be sure that it was his purpose to cast discredit on that theory and show that it was not a solution of the problem universally applicable. And having disposed of it he substitutes for it the principle that sufferings may be a trial of the faith of the godly.

That they are such a trial, and how they are so, is exhibited in the struggle which Job's mind passes through. The author of Job is an artist and a great poet, but though he gives ideal intensity and grandeur to the part which his hero plays, he does not create it. Probably he himself, certainly many others in that disastrous time, had played it in real life. That which made afflictions so severe a religious trial to the saints of that age was just the belief, which was held in common by Job and his friends, that the external events of life truly reflected the mind of God towards them: when they were prosperous they enjoyed His favour, when under affliction they experienced His displeasure—God rewarded every man according to his works. This, they believed, was the case, and it ought to be the case, they thought, under the providence of a righteous ruler of men. Hence when things were reversed, when the wicked triumphed and the righteous cleansed his heart in vain, their faith received such a shock as made it totter. Probably a deeper sense of personal unworthiness might have hushed all murmurs of the righteous under their afflictions, but the prosperity of the wicked was less easily accounted for. And when men, as in Job's case, charged such a saint, conscious of rectitude, with foul iniquities, his conscience reclaimed against the imputation, and as he knew no alternative, he was driven to impugn the rectitude of God in afflicting him.

Job takes this step founding upon his own experience, but he goes farther. Compelled to take a general survey of the world and the life of men, to meet the instances adduced by his friends, he perceives his own experience repeated a hundred times: that which befalls men is in no way apportioned according to their character:—

“ One dieth in his full strength,
Being wholly at ease and quiet;
And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul,
And hath not tasted of good;
They lie down alike in the dust,
And the worms cover them.” (Ch. xxi. 23).

Thus Job's victory over his friends is not gained without

inflicting a mortal wound upon himself. He misses the rectitude of God not only in his own instance but in God's general rule of the world (chap. xxiv. 1). But this was to pluck the moral Sun out of the heavens. This terrible thought of an unrighteous God paralyzed Job's heart. It was not his afflictions in themselves that dismayed him, it was that God was unrighteous in inflicting them : "Therefore am I troubled before him : when I consider, I am afraid of him. For God maketh my heart soft (terror-stricken), and the Almighty troubleth me" (chap. xxiii. 15). And the question was not a mere speculative one, as it might be nowadays : it was a profoundly religious one. Job had hitherto lived, as he thought, in the fellowship of a great and righteous Person, whose gracious providence had everywhere preserved his spirit (chap. x. 12), and memories of this fellowship in the hallowed past and yearnings for its renewal again in the present, crowd into the sufferer's mind and give a deeply religious colour and a singular pathos to all the struggles of his intellect.

As the question of the sufferings of the righteous was not of old a mere intellectual one but one of practical religious life, many answers are suggested to it. The answer given from the side of God in the speeches from the storm (chap. xxxviii. *seq.*) is, in the words of the Apostle : "Nay, but who art thou, O man, that replieth against God?"—although this answer is not made by God without such a revelation of Himself in making it as to give it power to compose the perplexed heart. The answer with which the pious soul stills its own trouble amidst a darkness which it cannot pierce is : "Nevertheless I am continually with thee : thou holdest my right hand" (Psalm lxxiii. 23), an answer given many times in Job's speeches. These are practical answers sufficient for the hour. Yet the religious mind craves for some principle which will carry it through its perplexities and justify the ways of God to man. Such a principle the author of the book suggests in the prologue, and further illustrates in the epilogue. And he allows Job to rise to a solution, which has in it all the elements of a universal one and satisfies the cravings of a human heart. This solution is reached in the well-known passage (chap. xix. 25) :—

"But I know that my redeemer liveth,
And in after time he shall stand upon the dust,
And, after this my skin is destroyed,
And without my flesh, I shall see God."

Job's redeemer is God, and he is assured that when his disease has brought him unto death he shall see God, no longer his

enemy but in peace. To suppose that Job expects this vision of God on this side of the grave is to contradict the whole scope of his language throughout the book. He is assured that his malady is mortal, and his malady was to him token of God's displeasure and the hiding of His face. On this side of death he shall not see God, but beyond his eyes shall behold Him. He expresses his assurance that he shall die under God's chastening hand with an unvarying consistency ; he has no hope of God's favour in this life, but, assured that God knows his innocence, he has an invincible certainty of it in the future. Hence in chap. xiv. the idea rises before his mind that after death he might be restored to a new life upon the earth to enjoy God's favour :

“ Oh that Thou wouldest hide me in Sheol,
 That Thou wouldest keep me secret till Thy wrath be past,
 That Thou wouldest appoint me a set time and remember me—
 If a man die shall he live again ?—
 All the days of my appointed time would I wait till my release came ;
 Thou wouldest call and I would answer Thee,
 Thou wouldest have a desire to the work of Thine hands.”

And in chap. xvi. 18, after appealing to the earth not to cover his blood unjustly shed, he adds his assurance of being justified in the future : “ Even now behold my witness is in heaven, and he that shall vouch for me is on high.” And this thrusting of the final solution of the mysteries of God's providence beyond the borders of this life is in harmony with those other passages where Job pushes his principles to their proper extreme. He shows not only that he himself and other righteous men die with their righteousness unrecognised in this world, but on the other side wicked men die in full prosperity and peace ; in neither case is the ultimate solution seen in this life.

Of course we must beware of attributing to any saint of that age such clear conceptions of the condition after death as subsequent revelation has given to us. Job has absolutely no knowledge of a *condition* after death, except the idea common in his day, that deceased persons descended into Sheol, the place of the dead : “ A land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness ” (chap. x. 22 ; iii. 17—19). Hence his redeemer “ will stand upon the dust ” ; his assurance is that though he die under his malady, as he is certain he shall, yet notwithstanding his death he shall yet see God reconciled to him, and be vindicated by him. His assurance is a religious necessity, a postulate of faith. Hence he rises to this lofty anticipation only for a moment, and falls back again into the demand to know the meaning of his afflictions.

Some writers, feeling justly that Job's anticipation in chap. xix. is the highest point to which the book reaches, have been inclined to think that the author should have closed it here, and that it would have been purer truth to allow Job to go down to the grave clasping to his breast his inextinguishable hope, than to restore him to prosperity in this life, as he does in the epilogue. Now it is plain that the author, when he allows Job to postpone his vindication by God beyond his death, does so of purpose and fully understanding the meaning of what he does, for elsewhere Job shows that the true relations of men to God, whether righteous or wicked, many times do not come to light in this life. But religion requires that they shall somehow be brought to light, and therefore this can be only after death.

Now if the faith in a future life had been sufficiently advanced to enable the author to *show* Job's vindication after death, he would naturally have ended his drama in this way. But there existed no such advanced faith or knowledge in regard to a future life in his time. The utmost that the efforts of pious spirits had attained in his day was in occasional flights of faith to pierce the darkness beyond this life, and assure themselves that their life with God here should not be interrupted there. But there was no such clearness of knowledge as to afford room for a scene of reconciliation and union between God and the pious soul. And yet the purpose of the writer required that he should *verify* Job's anticipations, because the object of his book was to show that afflictions are a trial leading to higher blessedness; and hence he is obliged to allow Job's hope to be verified in this life. It is to be observed, however, that the desire of Job's heart was a religious one entirely, that he should see God, and this desire was granted in the revelation of God out of the storm; the subsequent prosperity was but a corollary to this and no part of it.

8. *The Unity of the Book.*—Objections have been made to the prologue and epilogue with the view of showing that these were no parts of the original book. The objections are of very little weight; some historical introduction must have preceded the book, and there is no reason to suppose that our present introduction was not the primary one. The objection to the epilogue is that it falls into the old doctrine of retribution in this life, which it is the object of the book to discredit. This objection would tell also against the divine speeches, and the religious composure in this life which Job is enabled through them to reach.

The prevailing view among modern scholars is that the speeches

of Elihu (ch. xxxii.—xxxvii.) do not belong to the original book, but are the insertion of a later time. The grounds of this view are such as these:—1. That Elihu is unknown both to the prologue and epilogue; 2. That Job makes no reply to him; 3. That his citations from the book are so exact as to betray a reader of the poem; 4. That the language of his speeches shows signs of deterioration, marking a later age, and that he is characterised by a mannerism quite unlike the other speakers; 5. That his speeches destroy the connection between the challenge of Job (ch. xxxi. 35 *seq.*) and the reply of the Almighty; and 6, finally, that Elihu occupies virtually the same grounds with the friends, and that there is nothing in what he advances against Job which the latter would have regarded as any real answer to his complaints. It is also argued that where Elihu differs from the three friends, it is rather in a more advanced view of sin and a greater insistence upon the goodness of God in his afflictions, as well as in a deeper repugnance to the language of Job; things betraying a later date, and suggesting that the original book perplexed pious minds by its extraordinary boldness. The character of Elihu is very distinct. He is of a very devout nature; his reverence of God and fear before Him are very great. It is this feeling that makes him come forward to meet the assertions of Job—he will ascribe right to his Maker (xxxvi. 3). This reverent sensitiveness in regard to God constitutes the chief charm of Elihu's speeches, and the book would be decidedly poorer for the want of them.

9. *Age and Authorship of the Book.*—The age of the book must not be confounded with the age of Job himself. Job is represented as living in the patriarchal times, and the author of the book has skilfully thrown the colours of this age over his composition. Thus the divine names which the speakers employ are the patriarchal ones: God, God Almighty, but not Jehovah (cf. Ex. vi. 2, 3), though the author uses this name itself, xxviii. 28. Like the great forefathers of Israel, Job is rich in cattle (chap. i. 3; Gen. xii. 16); he is also the priest of his family (chap. i. 5), and offers the patriarchal “burnt-offering;” and all historical events alluded to are those of the patriarchal world (xviii. 15; xxii. 15). But though Job himself belonged to this age, the author is an Israelite, and the book is a reflection of the religious life and religious thought in Israel.

The date of such a book as Job, which contains few allusions to historical events, can be determined only approximately. The literature of Israel is, more than any other literature, national. It was the nation or people that was in covenant with Jehovah, and hence it is the destinies of this subject, the people,

that the religious mind follows with keenest interest. The literary compositions of any age reflect the conditions and state of mind of the people of that age, and the question to be put is : Of what period in the chequered history of the people is the Book of Job a reflection ? The opinion expressed by the Talmud that Moses was the author of Job is unworthy of any attention. The antique colour of the book suggested to uncritical minds that it was an ancient composition, and such minds are always ready to ascribe an anonymous writing to some well-known name. Neither the Mosaic age, however, nor the times that followed it—times of stirring enterprise and warfare—were favourable for the production of a work of deep reflection such as Job. And there is evidence in the book itself that the author was familiar with writings usually ascribed to the age of David ; the passage chap. vii. 17, betrays a knowledge of Psalm viii.

The earliest period to which the book can be assigned is the age of Solomon, and Luther appears to have placed it in this period, a view in which he is followed by many writers still. If we look into the great collections of the Proverbs, however, such as chap. xxv.—xxix. or x.—xxii., we find that though their purpose is to exhibit the operations of God's providence, there is not a trace in them of the disquieting problems of providence which fill the Book of Job. History had not yet forced such questions on men's minds. The collection Prov. i.—ix. probably belongs to the seventh century, but Job xxviii. is in all probability posterior to it. In Prov. viii. wisdom, *i.e.* a general and satisfying conception of God's operations in the world, is held out as attainable by man ; in Job xxviii. such comprehension of providence is spoken of as beyond the range of man's mind. The moral disorders of the world, the sorrowful destinies of many pious men baffled the religious mind of the time.

These two general facts, then, first, that questions of providence have entered upon a new phase, and that not its general course but its problems absorb men's attention ; and secondly, that a condition of great disorder and misery forms the background of the poem—both point to a late period in the history of Israel as that to which the book is due. When we read such passages as these: “The earth is given into the hands of the wicked ; He covereth the faces of the judges thereof” (ix. 24) ; “The tabernacles of tyrants prosper, and they that provoke God are secure” (vii. 6) ; “Out of the city the dying groan, and the soul of the wounded crieth out, yet God regardeth not the wrong” (xxiv. 12) ; and much more of the same kind, we feel that the picture is one of the public condition of the world, and not the mere creation of a sick and gloomy mind.

There are other arguments, also, which suggest a period not earlier than the Exile, *e.g.* the very lofty doctrine of God; and the inwardness of the morality taught (chap. xxxi.), and the points of contact which the book presents with Jeremiah and the ideas of his age, and the parallel between Job and the servant of the Lord in Isaiah xl.—lxvi. Most writers have felt that Job iii. and Jer. xx. 14 *seq.* are not independent of one another. Job iii. is highly elaborate and artistic; but the passage in Jeremiah, just on account of its greater simplicity and naturalness, is probably to be considered the original. The coincidences of Job with Isaiah xl.—lxvi. are very numerous. These chapters are now usually considered to belong to the period of the Exile, and the great probability is that the Book of Job owes its origin to the trials and religious perplexities of the same period.

We have been left in complete ignorance who the author of the book is, just as we are ignorant who the authors of many other parts of Scripture are. The book has been attributed to Job himself, Elihu, Moses, Solomon, Heman the Ezrahite, author of Psalm lxxxviii., Isaiah, Hezekiah, author of the hymn Isaiah xxxviii., Baruch, the friend of Jeremiah, and others. Conjecture is entirely vain. No literature contains so many great anonymous works as that of Israel. It was only the prophets that usually put their names to their writings. The writers of the Old Testament did not speak their own words but those of the Lord, and having delivered their message they passed out of sight, forgetting themselves and being speedily forgotten in name by others.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

1. THE Psalter forms a part of the third great division of the Hebrew scriptures known as the Kethubhim or Hagiographa. Both from its intrinsic importance and also from its liturgical use it commonly occupied the first place in this division, and hence the Old Testament was summed up under the three names of the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke xxiv. 44).*

In Hebrew Bibles the Psalter is called *Tehillim*, *i.e.* “The Praises,” and a more suitable title could hardly have been chosen; for the psalms ring with the voice of joy and thanksgiving; and even those in which the confession of sin, or the wail of sorrow, or the cry for help predominate are not all gloom. The struggle ends in the hope and the assurance of deliverance, and the heart breaks forth into praise.

A yet earlier title, given, however, not to the whole, but only to a portion of the Psalter, is *Tephilloth*, “Prayers.” This applies apparently to the collection comprised in the first two books; for the subscription to Psalm lxxii., with which the second book closes, informs us that “The *prayers* of David the son of Jesse are ended,” an intimation apparently that all David’s psalms, so far as they were then known, had here been gathered together.

It is noticeable that only one psalm in those two books, the 17th, is separately called “A Prayer,” and only one in the whole collection, the 145th, is separately called “A Praise;” but the two general titles “prayers” and “praises” admirably sum up the whole character and intention of the Psalter, as the Liturgy and Hymn-book of the Old Testament Church. Our

* The order indeed is not universal, for in the Talmud Ruth precedes the Psalms (the order being Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs) and in the Masoreth and the Spanish MSS. Chronicles is placed first; but in the German MSS. and in most printed editions the order is Psalms, Proverbs, Job; then the five Megilloth, as they are called, viz. Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther; and then Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles.

own English title “Psalms,” comes to us through the Latin word from the Septuagint translators, who styled the whole collection *ψαλμοί*, as denoting that, in accordance with their use in the liturgy of the Temple and the Synagogue, these sacred poems were sung with a musical accompaniment.*

2. *Division of the Psalter.*—The Psalter as it stands in our Hebrew Bibles is divided into five books, the close of each of the first four being marked by a doxology, and the 150th Psalm itself forming the doxology which concludes the last, and indeed the whole collection. These books are distributed as follows:—Book I., Psalms i.—xli.; Book II., Psalms xlii.—lxxii.; Book III., Psalms lxxiii.—lxxxix.; Book IV., Psalms xc.—cvi.; Book V., Psalms cvii.—cl. This division, according to the Midrash on Psalm i. 1, follows that of the Pentateuch: “Moses gave to the Israelites the five Books of the Law, and, corresponding to these, David gave them the Book of Psalms, which consists of five books;” and in like manner Hippolytus, quoted by Epiphanius, calls the Psalter “a second Pentateuch.” The division, it must be confessed, is somewhat artificial as regards the Fourth and Fifth Books. At the end of each of the first three books the doxology stands appropriately as marking the end of certain groups or collections of psalms, but there is no appropriateness in the division which separates the 106th Psalm from the 105th. Consequently the doxology must have been placed here by the last collector or editor in order to make up the fivefold division. In 1 Chron. xiv. 35, 36, there is a quotation with some variation, from verses 47 and 48 of the 106th Psalm, the latter of which forms the doxology. But the chronicler, instead of giving it “Let all the people say, Amen,” turns the ascription into an historical fact, “And all the people said, Amen.” It is doubtful therefore whether the division between these books existed in his time, for he treats the first part of the doxology as an integral part of the Psalm.

It will be observed that a larger number of psalms are by their titles ascribed to David than to any other author: all in the First Book, except four that are anonymous; nearly all in the second half of the Second Book; one in the Third Book; two in the fourth; and fifteen in the Fifth; in all seventy-three psalms, or nearly one-half of the whole collection.

Next to him come David’s singers: (i) The Sons of Korah, to whom twelve psalms are assigned (or eleven if we regard Psalms xlii. and xlivi. as one); (ii) Asaph, who is also the reputed author of twelve psalms. He seems to have ranked only second

* The word “psalter” is strictly the name of a musical instrument: whether it was invented in Greece or in Babylon is uncertain.

to David as a master of sacred song (1 Chron. xv. 7—21, xvi. 5 : Neh. xii. 46) ; (iii) Heman (mentioned 2 Chron. xx. 19 as a famous musician), who as a member of the Korahite guild is said to have written Psalm lxxviii., for this seems to be the meaning of the double title of that psalm : (iv) Ethan the Ezrahite, who, like Heman, is named only as the author of one psalm, the 89th. The only other authors to whom particular psalms are ascribed are Moses, who is said to have written one psalm, the 90th, acknowledged on all hands to be a psalm of great antiquity, and Solomon, who is said to have written two, the 72nd and the 127th.

There are indeed certain variations in the titles as they stand in the Septuagint and in other ancient versions. For instance, in the title of Ps. cxxxvii. the LXX. add the name of Jeremiah to that of David. In Psalms cxxxviii., cxlv., cxlvii., cxlviii., they gave Haggai and Zechariah as the authors, the three last being anonymous in the Hebrew text. In lxxi. they add to the name of David, "Of the sons of Jonadab and of those that were first led captive," thus indicating their belief that this was a psalm dating from the Captivity, whilst retaining the name of David as they found it in their copies. We see then that by far the larger number of the psalms were traditionally held to be David's, or to have been written by Levitical singers appointed by him for the musical service of the Temple and inspired by his influence and example ; and hence the whole collection came to be styled "Psalms of David," just as the Book of Proverbs was called "Proverbs of Solomon," though a large part of it belongs to a later time.

3. *The Formation and Arrangement of the Psalter.*—When we come to examine the Psalter more closely one of the first things that strikes us is that besides its division into five books it consists of a number of smaller collections. Groups of psalms supposed to be by the same author and having a common purpose are placed together. Thus the First Book consists almost exclusively of psalms ascribed to David ; the second of a series of Psalms by the sons of Korah, and another series by David ; the third has a group by Asaph, followed by a second group of Korahite psalms ; in the fourth, Psalms xcii.—c. form one great prophetic anthem ; in the fifth we have besides "the Pilgrim Songs" (cxx.—cxxxii.) and the "Hallelujah Psalms," the group cxiii.—cxviii. which is called "the Hallel." All these were originally no doubt separate collections, smaller hymn-books, which were at length combined so as to form our present Psalter.

In the main, as might be expected, the arrangement is chronological. The Fourth and Fifth Books carry upon their face

the evidence of a later date. They are full of allusions to the Exile and to the Return. The earlier books are of a different character. We may assign the first two in the main to David and his contemporaries. The Third represents a later period of Jewish song and may have been collected by "the men of Hezekiah." But the chronological order is not always observed. There is one psalm in the Second Book, the 44th, which is certainly not of David's time, and has been brought down by many critics to the time of the Maccabees. In like manner the 74th and the 79th in the Third Book have been held to refer to the destruction and profanation of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. On the other hand, the 101st and the 110th Psalms in the Fourth Book are almost certainly Davidic. Still in the main, as I have said, the earlier psalms are to be found in the earlier books, the later in those with which the collection closes.

Let us now look at the phenomena presented by the several books with special reference to the supposed authorship of the different psalms. The psalms in the First Book, except four, the 1st, the 2nd, the 10th, and the 33rd, which are anonymous, are ascribed, as has been said, to David. But the 1st Psalm was commonly regarded as a general introduction to the book, and according to an ancient arrangement the 2nd Psalm was united with it, which would account for the latter having no title. Similarly in the version of the LXX. the 10th Psalm forms one with the 9th, and the alphabetical arrangement, which though broken is still discernible running through both psalms, lends colour to the theory that they were originally one poem. On the other hand, the LXX. give Psalm xxxiii. to David.

At the end of the Second Book we read, "The Prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." In point of fact Psalms li.—lxxi. are attributed to David with the exception of three which are anonymous in the Hebrew, but at least two of them are by the LXX. given to the same author. But the first half of this book (Psalms xlii.—l.) is a collection of Korahite poems. It is scarcely credible that the subscription could have been added by the general editor. He would not have inserted the twelve Korahite psalms so as to break the series of Davidic hymns, which but for this insertion would run on continuously from the beginning of the First Book (Psalm iii.) to the end of the Second. There is another important circumstance to be noted. In the First Book the Divine Name almost exclusively employed is Jehovah (Yahveh), whereas the abstract term Elohim is quite exceptional. In the Second Book, on the contrary, the use of Elohim is the rule and the use of Jehovah the exception. That this is deliberately done is shown for instance in such a Psalm

as the 45th, where we have the repetition of the name, "God, thy God" instead of "Jehovah, thy God." Still more striking is the change where the same psalm occurs in both books. Thus the 14th Psalm appears with slight alterations as the 53rd, and the latter portion of the 40th as the 70th, and the two editions are distinguished by the respective use of the two names. This cannot possibly be due to the same redactor, who would never have thought of arbitrarily substituting the one name for the other in the two editions. It is evident that this was done as a part of a general plan. It is doubtful even whether the editor of the second collection could have had the first before him when he was preparing his own.

4. But were all the psalms in the First Book with the exception above mentioned written by David? When we come to examine their contents and compare them with the historical notices which form part of the inscriptions in several instances, we shall find reason to question the accuracy of the traditional statements. The 9th and 10th Psalms obviously refer to a state of things to which we find no parallel in David's history. Heathen enemies have been in the land and have cruelly oppressed Israel; but God has executed judgment upon them and overthrown them, so that their very memorial has perished. The time is subsequent to the removal of the ark to Zion, for God is described as "dwelling in Zion," and the poet declares he will praise Him "in the gates of the daughter of Zion." But the circumstances are not those of David, if we are to take the history in the Books of Samuel as a guide to us. Again Psalms xx. and xxi. could hardly have been written by David: they are "not spoken by a king, but addressed to the king by his people." "To suppose that David wrote for the people the words in which they should express their feelings towards his throne is to sacrifice the fresh spontaneity of the Psalms to mere theory." Psalm xxii. describes sufferings such as David never knew. Never in any of his persecutions by Saul was he reduced to straits such as these, and though this is strictly a Messianic psalm, still we have no right to assume that it is so entirely predictive as to correspond to nothing in the circumstances of the author. In the inscription of Psalm xxxiv. Abimelech is said to have been King of Gath in the time of David, whereas the only Abimelech mentioned in the history was a contemporary of Abraham's, and Achish was King of Gath when David found refuge there.*

* Dr. Robertson Smith alleges objections regarding the Davidic authorship of some of the other psalms that do not appear to me to be equally valid. "Several of the psalms of the first book," he says, "not only speak of Zion

5. But as we have no reason to suppose that David prefixed his name to his own poems, and as in accordance with Oriental custom they were probably handed down for some time by word of mouth, sung or recited, before they were committed to writing, it is easy to see how psalms the authorship of which was doubtful or unknown would be given as a matter of course to the greatest of the national poets. The most that can be said is that these titles represent the tradition at the time when the first collection, Psalms i.—xli., was made. How easily the Davidic authorship of any hymn came to be accepted we see from the statement in the First Book of Chronicles (xvi. 7) that, when he appointed the Levitical singers, David delivered a psalm into their hands which is a mere cento of quotations from other Psalms, chiefly from the 105th and 106th, which are both as late as the Exile, the 106th having a distinct reference to it (ver. 46, 47). And it strikingly illustrates the uncritical method of procedure which could assign this composite psalm to David, that not only is this reference to the Captivity put into his mouth (1 Chron. xvi. 35), but, as has already been observed, even the doxology slightly varied with which the Fourth Book concludes, though the division between the Fourth and Fifth Books is unquestionably later than the Exile.

6. As regards the series of Davidic psalms found in the Second Book, Psalms li.—lxx., except lxvi. and lxvii., which are in the Hebrew anonymous, the same remark applies to the titles of these as to those of the First Book: the contents of the Psalm are often at variance with the reputed authorship. The 59th Psalm may be taken as an instance in point. It is said to have been written by David, "when Saul sent, and they watched the house to put him to death." But the allusions in the psalm to the writer's enemies are quite inconsistent with the supposed circumstances. Saul's emissaries could not possibly be described as making their rounds every evening as a patrol about the city, uttering oaths and curses, howling like unclean dogs seeking their garbage, men whose curse it is to wander about for bread, men finally whose overthrow will make the name of the God

as God's holy mountain, which David must do, after he had brought the ark to Jerusalem, but allude to the Temple in which the singer of Psalm xxvii. desires to live continually. But the house of God at Zion in David's time was not a temple but a tent." I have, however, shown in my commentary on the 5th Psalm that the word translated "temple" may be used of any considerable structure, as it was for instance of the Tabernacle and the surrounding buildings at Shiloh; and on the 27th Psalm I have pointed out that the author expressly calls these same structures "a tent." Obviously, as at Shiloh, there was not merely the tent but buildings of a substantial kind (doors are mentioned) which enclosed it.

of Jacob known throughout the world. It is difficult to believe that such a psalm could apply to *any* circumstances in David's life. The Davidic collection was believed, as we have seen, to end with the Second Book. Yet we find a few more psalms, more especially in the Fifth Book, bearing his name. These may have escaped the notice of the collector of the first two books, but most of them seem to be of later date.

7. There can be no doubt that the fourth and Fifth Books were compiled subsequent to the return from the Exile. The Exile itself, with its painful memories and ardent hopes, had stirred many a heart to song. We hear in these psalms the sorrowful sighing of those who hung their harps on the willows by the waters of Babylon, and the joy of those who were "like unto them that dream," when "the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion." Many of these poems tell their own tale, and, speaking generally, the tone and colouring are those of a later time. The sparkle, the vigour, the concentrated energy and passion of the Davidic lyre are for the most part absent; they flow in a smoother and gentler current. It does not follow, however, that none of these songs belong to an earlier period. Some ancient poems might have been overlooked when the earlier collections were made, and psalms like the 101st and the 110th are both of them almost certainly psalms of David.

But there is no trace in these books, as in the earlier ones, of distinct groups or collections of Davidic psalms. Those ascribed to David are scattered here and there, and some of those which the titles give to him it is quite certain are not his. This is manifestly the case with the 122nd, which, speaking of "thrones of the house of David," must have been written at a time when his dynasty had been long in existence. The 124th Psalm is full of the return from Babylon. The 144th is a curiously composite piece, containing many quotations from earlier poems, and could not have been written by David. It is ascribed to him exactly in the same way as we have already seen in 1 Chron. xvi. 8—36; a psalm put together out of Psalms xcvi., cv., and cvi., is said to have been given by David "into the hand of Asaph and his brethren." The same may be said, but upon other grounds, of the 139th Psalm. It is one of the most striking psalms in the whole collection, in loftiness of conception and solemn grandeur of expression second to none, but its Aramaic forms either betoken a dialectic variety, the author perhaps being a native of the northern kingdom, or are evidence that it was composed after the Exile.

8. The Fifth Book has one distinct group of psalms, called in our Version "Songs of Degrees," which is of peculiar interest.

With one exception they are all very short, and must have constituted originally a small separate hymn-book, intended apparently for the use of pilgrims going up to Jerusalem to keep the national feasts. The title of these psalms, which is strictly "Songs of Ascent" (or going up), denotes the purpose which the collector had in view. Other interpretations have indeed been given of the title, but this seems the most probable, and it is that with which the contents of the collection harmonise; some of these poems referring directly to incidents of the journey, and others expressing the feelings of the pilgrims as they came in sight of the Holy City or stood within its gates. But there are also in these little songs constant allusions to the return from the Captivity, showing that they could not have been written earlier than the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. Hence some critics have supposed that the "going up" of the title refers to the return from Babylon, which was spoken of as a "going up" to the Holy Land. The other explanation, however, is the better, as being the more comprehensive. The collection consists of post-Captivity psalms, but it was intended for pilgrimages to the Second Temple, and hence the double allusions by which it is marked. The custom of going up to keep the feasts with music and song was ancient, as we learn from Isaiah xxx. 29.

9. The psalms which are assigned to the Levitical singers are not by their titles associated with any particular circumstances in the history. But it is perfectly plain that such historical psalms as the 74th and 79th, describing the devastation wrought in the Temple and the profanation of it by the erection of heathen emblems, could not have been written by the Asaph who was the contemporary of David. Hence some critics have maintained that "Asaph" stands for "the sons of Asaph," and that these psalms were composed by members of the Levitical guild, either after Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the Temple, or after the havoc and profanation wrought by Antiochus Epiphanes. It is noticeable, however, that we never find "the sons of Asaph" in any of the Psalm inscriptions, though we do find the phrase in the Book of Chronicles.

These two groups of psalms by Levitical singers are marked by certain peculiarities. In those ascribed to Asaph God is frequently spoken of as the *Shepherd* of Israel, which is His flock, and as the *Judge* both of Israel and of all the nations of the world. There are many references to the giving of the law on Sinai, to the march through the wilderness, and to other portions of the ancient history, such as do not occur in the psalms of the first two books. In these psalms both the Divine names, *Elohim* and

Jehovah, and also the names *'El* and *'Elyon* (Most High) occur. There are besides several expressions which are found either exclusively or most frequently in these psalms.

In like manner the psalms "of the sons of Korah" have their characteristic features. As in the psalms of Asaph God is the *Judge*, so in these psalms He is represented as the *King*. Jerusalem is spoken of as "the city of God," and as under the protection of God. The name of God used by preference is *Elohim*, though *Jehovah* is also found in xlvi., xlvii., xlviii., lxxxiv., lxxxvii.; other names are "the Living God" and "*Jehovah Sabaoth*" (*Jehovah of Hosts*).

10. Both groups have several features in common. Both the Korahite and Asaphite psalms are, with few exceptions, national songs, either prayers for the nation in its distresses or thanksgivings for its deliverance; they abound in references to the Sanctuary and the joy to be experienced in its service; they reflect the feelings and hopes of those who, like the Levites, were engaged in that service. The hypothesis therefore that they were written by or composed for the use of members of Levitical guilds is thus confirmed. Dr. Robertson Smith calls attention to another feature which the two groups have in common. They contain no confession of sin. In some of them Israel appears as divided into a righteous class, to whom the singer belongs, and a wicked class against whom he prays. Elsewhere the whole nation seems to speak with one voice, and claims to be righteous, and not suffering for its own sin. "Wherever sin is acknowledged in these psalms it is the sin of a former generation;" which, however, can hardly be maintained in the case of the 85th Psalm. And he proceeds to argue that it is impossible that the really godly could have used such language before the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. No Israelite before the Exile could have used language like that of the 44th Psalm, averring that, in spite of their afflictions, they had not forgotten God, and that for His sake they were accounted as sheep for the slaughter. This refers to a religious persecution, and hence he would bring down this psalm and the 74th and 79th to a date as late as that of Artaxerxes II., when the Persian general Bogoses defiled the Temple.

The conclusions at which we arrive from these investigations are:—

First. That the present Psalter is made up of a number of smaller collections, which originally existed in an independent form, the earliest of them being a Davidic hymnal.

Secondly. That besides these groups there were several indi-

vidual psalms, which were either taken up at different times into one of the minor collections or were incorporated by the final editor, and inserted in their present place for reasons which cannot now be ascertained.

Thirdly. That we cannot trust the notices as to the authorship of the different psalms, especially where these notices are of an historical kind, because there is a manifest disagreement between the language of the poem and the supposed circumstances of the writer.

Fourthly. The existing arrangement of the Psalter is so far chronological that in the main the earlier groups stand first and the later last; but individual psalms seem here and there to be curiously out of place.

12. *Numbering of the Psalms.*—We find a different numbering of the Psalms in the Hebrew and in the LXX. Indeed, even the Hebrew MSS. exhibit some varieties in this respect. In some of them Psalms i. and ii., Psalms xlii. and xliii., and Psalms cxvi. and cxvii. are united. On the other hand, Psalm cxviii. is divided into two, or even into three. In many instances the entire number is set down at 149. The LXX., who are followed by the Vulgate, combine Psalms ix. and x., and also cxiv. and cxv. On the other hand, they divide cxvi. into two (ver. 1—9, 10—19), and in like manner cxlvii. into two (ver. 1—11, 12—20); thus obtaining the same number of 150 for the whole collection, though by a different distribution.

This divergence is easily explained if we remember, that in the case of those psalms which have no inscription there would be little to distinguish between the end of one psalm and the beginning of the next, nothing more, perhaps, than a small space between the two. In the earliest MSS. probably the copyist would not have even the inscription to guide him, and would be left very much to his own judgment. That two psalms so utterly unlike in their contents and style as the first and second should nevertheless have been regarded as one psalm, as they were by many of the Rabbis and according to the Talmudic tradition (*T.B. Berakhot*, 9 b), shows in what an uncritical fashion questions of this kind were decided. The only ground alleged for this union of the two was, that the one began and the other ended with the same word “Blessed” (*ashre’*).

As regards other instances, the LXX. were probably right in combining Psalms ix and x., as the acrostic arrangement, though broken, may still be traced through both psalms. And Psalms xlii. and xliii., being marked by the same refrain, doubtless constituted originally one poem. On the other hand, some psalms which now appear as one may have been formed out of two.

This may have been the case with xix. ver. 1—6 and 7—14; xxiv. 1—6 and 7—10; cxliv. 1—11 and 12—15; and possibly a few others. Indeed, there are many proofs that the Psalter has undergone editing. Additions, omissions, alterations of particular passages were made, as in our modern hymn-books, in order to adapt a psalm to a special occasion. This will explain how Psalms ix. and x., and Psalms xlvi. and xlvi., which were originally one, came to be broken into two, and how Psalm lxx., which was originally the concluding portion of Psalm xl., came to be detached from it and altered; and how, again, Psalm liii. appears as a new version of Psalm xiv. Psalm cviii. consists of portions of two other psalms, lvii. 8—12 and lx. 7—14. The variations in Psalm xviii., as compared with the version of the same psalm given in 2 Sam. xxii., may have arisen from their having been transmitted orally long before they were committed to writing.

13. *Liturgical and Musical Notices.*—As regards these it must be confessed that we are very much in the dark.

(i.) *Liturgical.* To this class belongs the oft-repeated *Lam'ntsäach*, rendered in the Authorised Version “For the Chief Musician.” He was probably the person who, like the precentor in our cathedrals, had the chief direction of the musical portion of the services; the word is used in 2 Chron. ii. 17 in the general sense of “leader.” The phrase may either denote that the particular psalm to which it is prefixed was given to him to be set to music for the Temple service, or simply that, as intended for public worship, it was put into his hands that he might take care that it was properly rendered both by band and singers. The expression occurs fifty-five times in the inscriptions (fifty-two times in the first three books), and, except in the case of two anonymous psalms, lxvi. and lxvii., is only prefixed to psalms of David, Asaph, and the sons of Korah. Connected with this perhaps is the notice *l'lammed* (“for teaching”), Psalm lx., which may mean that the precentor was to teach the psalm to the Levites, just as David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan was to be taught to the men of Judah, 2 Sam. i. 18.*

Two other liturgical notices are apparently connected with sacrificial acts. Thus *l'haskir* (“to bring to remembrance”), Psalms xxxviii. and lxx., may refer to the *azkardh*, or “offering of incense,” at the time of offering which these psalms were to be sung. The phrase occurs in 1 Chron. xvi. 4, where it is rendered in the Revised Version “to celebrate,” and is joined with “to give thanks and to praise” as a part of the duties pre-

* “The Bow” may be the title of the elegy, or the word may have crept into the text by mistake. It does not appear in the Vat. text of the LXX.

scribed to the Levites. In like manner, *l'thodah* ("for thanksgiving"), Psalm c., may have been intended to signify that the psalm was to be sung when the thank-offering was presented.

(ii.) *Musical*. Under this head come—(a) The different names by which a psalm is described, as *Shir*, "a song," *Mizmór*, "a psalm," denoting that it was to be sung with instrumental accompaniment; *Michtam* (LXX. *στηλογραφία*), perhaps "a golden poem"; or "a mystery," a song of deep spiritual import; *Maskil*, "a skilfully constructed ode" (LXX. *συνέσεως, εἰς σύνεστιν*), a meaning which seems to be required by the use of the word in the body of a psalm (xlvii. 7 [8]), where it must mean "in a skilful strain," or "a skilfully constructed song;" *Shiggaion*, "perhaps a dithyrambic ode," as being irregular in form or metre. But this and other explanations are very doubtful, as we have in Hab. iii., "Upon *Shiggionoth*," which may, however, denote that the song was to be sung "after the manner of dithyrambs" or "to dithyrambic measures." Compare the expressions "Upon *Alamoth*," "Upon the *Sheminith* (or octave)."

(b) The instruments which were to be employed when the psalm was sung in the Temple service: "Upon *Nehiloth*" (inscription of Psalm v.), "To the flutes," or with flute accompaniment; * "On *Neginath*" (Psalms iv., vi., liv., lv., lxvii., lxxvi.), i.e. "with accompaniment of stringed instruments;" and similarly, though with a slight variation of form, in Psalm lxi.

(c) Particular tones or measures to which the psalm was to be sung. *On Alamoth* (Psalm xlvi.), "after the manner of maidens;" and *Upon Sheminith* (vi. xii.), "upon the octave" (found also in the historical books, 1 Chron. xv. 20), the former referring, it has been conjectured, to the women's voices—maidens we know joining in the singing and music of the service (Psalm lxviii. 25)—and the latter to the bass voices upon the (lower) octave; *Upon Gittith* (Psalm viii.), "after the manner of Gath," some measure or style which the Hebrews had borrowed from their Philistine neighbours in that city; *To Jeduthun* (xxxix.) or *Upon Jeduthun*, "after the manner of Jeduthun," one of David's famous singers.

(d) Besides these notices, there are several others which probably indicate the first word of other, apparently secular, poems

* It has been objected to this explanation that it is not likely that wind instruments would be employed in sacred music as an accompaniment to the singing, but Delitzsch has observed that the use of the flute in divine worship is attested by Is. xxx. 29 (cf. 1 Sam. x. 5; 1 Kings i. 40). In the second Temple, on twelve days in the year, the "Hallel" was sung to the accompaniment of flutes. See Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Psalms* (Eng. trans.), part i., pp. 43, 155.

to the airs of which particular psalms were commonly sung. There is nothing incredible in this. In the sixteenth century Clement Marot's metrical translations of the Psalms in French were often sung to popular airs. Reuss tells us that he has himself heard in missions organised by the Jesuits, after the restoration of the monarchy in France, religious hymns sung to the airs of the operas then in vogue. What more natural than that something of the same kind should have taken place in Jerusalem, where, as we know, singing and music were the constant accompaniments of banquets (see *e.g.* Is. v. 12; Am. vi. 5, viii. 10), and where there must consequently have been a large number of secular songs, every trace of which has disappeared except so far as they have been preserved in these titles. Thus, for instance, in the inscription of Psalm xxii., we have (see Revised Version) "set to Aijeleth hash-Shahar," that is "the hind of the morning," because it was set to the same music as some song beginning with those words. So again in Psalm xlvi. we have "set to Shoshannim," that is "lilies," the song beginning with the word lilies. Or again Psalm lvi. the melody was one which was originally that of a song beginning, "The silent dove of far off (lands)," or as others interpret, "The dove of the distant terebinths." Or yet again, as in Psalm lviii. the melody was borrowed from a vintage song, the words "Al tash-heth," "Destroy not," being perhaps the first words of the song of which we may have a further trace, as Dr. Robertson Smith suggests, in the Prophet Isaiah (lxv. 8), "When the new wine is found in the cluster, men say, 'Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.'" But as regards all these musical notices we must speak with due reserve. They were enigmas even to the Septuagint translators, and the most recent investigations have added nothing to our knowledge.

(e) The same may be said of another musical sign, the word Selah, which does not indeed occur in the inscriptions but in the body of the psalm. It occurs most commonly at the end of a strophe, but sometimes in the middle of a verse, and even where it interrupts the sense, as *e.g.* in lv. 19 [20], lxvii. 7 [8], 33 [34]. The LXX. translate it by διάφαλμα, evidently supposing that it denoted the intervention at the particular place of a musical symphony. The voices ceased and the musical instruments alone were heard. The word, derived from a root signifying "to lift up," was intended as a direction to the musicians to strike up in a louder strain. Of the many interpretations which have been given of the word, this seems on the whole the most probable.

14. *The Psalms as a Collection of Religious Poetry.*—The Psalms

are a phenomenon unique in literature ; there is no other collection of sacred poetry in the world that can be compared with them. The Psalter indeed is not one book, but many. It consists not of one but of several collections of hymns and spiritual songs put together at various times. It covers a period of well nigh a thousand years, from David, the great master of Jewish song, down, perhaps, to the last great struggle for national independence in the time of the Maccabees. It covers a still wider space if the 90th Psalm was written, as its title indicates, by Moses, and indeed that psalm must be in any case of very considerable antiquity. The Psalter is thus the marvellous record of human hearts pouring themselves out from age to age and from century to century in communion with God. It traverses all the vicissitudes of human life. It is both national and personal. It sings the praises of God in nature and in grace. It goes down into the deepest depths of human anguish ; it soars to the highest heights of human joy. But, above all, the Psalms glow with a depth and tenderness of personal affection towards God such as has never been surpassed even in the hymns of the Christian Church.

In prayer and praise God and man draw nigh one to the other ; and the Psalms have this distinctive feature, and it is to be found in all of them, they are true in their representation of God, true in their representation of man's heart and man's needs and aspirations.

(i.) They are true in their representation of God. It is the same God who is the stay of all their hearts. It is not as in heathen prayers and hymns, a number of different and rival deities who are the objects of worship and praise ; it is the One God, Elohim or Jehovah, whom all alike adore. The names may be different, the Being is one. Who is this God who thus binds them to Himself ? Who is this God for whom words seem too weak to express His glory or to celebrate His lovingkindness ? He is the God who has revealed Himself to them and to their fathers, and taken them into His holy covenant. He is not like the gods of the heathen, the impersonation of the powers of Nature, or the merely exaggerated image of degraded and profligate men. The gods of the heathen were, at the best, gods of the wood and the river and the sea, gods of the winds and the storms and the sunrise ; and too often were monsters of cruelty and lust and passion and vindictiveness, beings whom men supposed they could propitiate by sacrifice and offerings, but beings, like themselves, capricious, revengeful, licentious, such as no true heart could honour, much less adore and love.

But the God of the Psalms is not only one, He is not only the

absolute Ruler and King of the universe, not only the God to whose glory all creation bears witness, who has made the sun and the moon and the stars, who has established the round world that it cannot be moved, in whose hand are the deep places of the earth and the heights of the mountains are His, who covereth the heavens with clouds and prepareth rain for the earth, who giveth to the beast his food and to the young ravens that cry—not only the Lord of Nature, full of power and majesty, but also the God of holiness and righteousness and truth, who will be honoured and worshipped by his reasonable creatures in truth and holiness and righteousness.

This is no projection of man's understanding, no invention of man's heart. The conception is far too pure and too lofty. God in His dwelling-place above and in His temple upon earth is a holy God, a God who hateth iniquity and with whom evil cannot dwell. And yet He is not a God who repels His creatures. He is full of tender pity and condescension. He listens to the cry of the penitent heart, He is the helper of all that are oppressed, "the Father of the fatherless and the God of the widow, even God in His holy habitation." "He bears our burdens, He forgives our iniquities, He heals our diseases, He crowns us with lovingkindness and tender mercies." "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy towards them that fear Him." "Like as a father pitith his children, so the Lord pitith them that fear Him."

This is no unknown or distant God. There is no doubt in the minds of any of the psalmists of Israel as to the object of worship, no question, as in the refrain of a well-known Vedic hymn, "Who is the God to whom I shall offer sacrifice?" Jesus Christ our Lord has indeed brought God nearer to us, because He, the Eternal Son, has manifested the Father in human flesh, so that He could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Nevertheless, it is the same God who was the joy of the hearts of Hebrew psalmists; and the fact remains that with all the bright illumination of the Christian revelation, the words of Hebrew psalmists are still used in all churches and in all lands as the best expression of Christian adoration, whether in the closet or in the congregation.

(ii.) And this also because they are the true and adequate expression of human needs and desires and aspirations. Hence their permanence; and this it is that is so striking. These are no dead echoes from the past, no curiosities of an extinct literature. They are not like the Vedic hymns or the hymns of the Avesta, with which they have sometimes been compared—relics of a bygone age, telling indeed of human longings and aspira-

tions, of a feeling after God if haply they might find Him, but never striking deep root even in the heart of the nation for whom they were written, far less evoking any sentiment of awe and worship in other nations.

The Psalms live and breathe. They are not the deserted shrines of a cold and extinguished worship, altars on which no flame of devotion any longer burns. Empires have risen and perished; the face of the world has changed again and again; Christianity has succeeded to Judaism; even Jewish history and Jewish prophecy do not always hold us under their spell; but the Psalms have a fascination from which we cannot escape. They appeal to our Christian conscience and our Christian emotions. They are the best expression of our feelings in our purest and healthiest moments. They never grow old. They inspire, direct, control our hearts at all times; they answer to all our moods. The joys, the sorrows, the penitence, the fear, the doubt, the trust, the despair, the triumph, all are ours. There is not a note of the human harp, not one of its myriad strings, which does not find its response there. The words are the words we want; they are written for us. And this, because they are the true utterances of human hearts, taught by the Spirit of God, because His hand has swept the strings and brought out their fitful yet harmonious music. What other explanation can be given of this phenomenon? All is real here. There is no exaggeration, no gloss, none of that unhealthy sentimentalism which so often disfigures mediæval hymns and modern hymns which imitate them, the sickly effusions of a morbid religious feeling with which a manly heart can have no sympathy.

The Psalms are real. It is not that they are not full of poetry. They abound in magnificent poetry. They lay all nature under contribution for splendid images and bold comparisons. They have a wealth of beauty in which they are not surpassed by the poets of any nation. But it is the poetry of truth. Man's heart as it is, not as he would make it out to be, finds here its exact expression. And therefore the Psalms can never grow old. They are fresh now, as fresh as they were some two or three thousand years ago. Hence it is that we use them in our services day by day; hence it is that we love them and meditate on them and pray them, and find no other book in the world so helpful to us in our daily communing with God. Is there any reasonable, any probable, any possible explanation of the fact but this, that the Spirit of God, who knows man's heart, breathed on the hearts of them that wrote, and thereby made their words the perpetual measure and adequate expression of all true prayer and praise?

15. *The Imprecations in the Psalms.*—Although the Psalms have been an abiding element in all Christian worship, it must be admitted that there are some tones in the Psalter which seem to jar upon our feelings, which do not naturally or readily adapt themselves to Christian sentiment. There is an outburst ever and anon of vindictive joy, there is an exultation in the overthrow of the wicked, as in the 58th Psalm: “The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance, he shall wash his footsteps in the blood of the ungodly.” There is an almost savage delight in the destruction of the oppressor, as in the 137th Psalm: “Happy shall he be that taketh thy little ones and dasheth them against the stones.” There are withering imprecations, as in the 69th and the 109th Psalms, so fierce and so elaborately wrought that it makes one’s blood run cold to read them. How are we to account for them? We take them on our lips. They are retained in Christian liturgies. On what principle can we justify their retention?

(i.) Some persons would say, They are relics of a barbarous age, evidences of a moral standard infinitely below that of the Gospel, and therefore quite unsuitable for Christian worship.

(ii.) Others have attempted to justify the repetition of these psalms in public worship and in private meditation by applying the language to the spiritual struggles of the Christian. The enemies we have to face are not persecutors or tyrants such as the oppressors of Israel were against whom the Psalmists utter their burning words, but spiritual foes. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

Accordingly the language of the Psalmists is to be turned from its original sense into a spiritual channel. Those vehement scathing words may be a prayer for the defeat of Satan and his hosts, or for the subjugation of fleshly lusts which war against the soul. So for instance in the 137th Psalm, some of the Fathers and expositors who follow them expound “Babylon” as meaning “the flesh.” The “little ones” are “fleshy lusts” in the earlier stages of their assaults whilst they are yet young, as it were, and before they have gathered strength, and “the stones” are to be interpreted of “the rock,” which is Christ, against which they are to be dashed and so destroyed.

Fanciful and arbitrary interpretations of this kind are really no interpretations at all. And how is it possible to carry out such a principle of interpretation consistently? How in our spiritual warfare could we adopt with any definite meaning such words

as these: "Set thou an ungodly man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand;" "Let his prayer be turned into sin;" "Let him be blotted out of the book of life," and the like? The unnatural strain which must be put upon words to make them fit into such a system of exegesis ought long ago to have led expositors to abandon it.

(iii.) Others again would regard these psalms as predictive. They remind us that the 69th Psalm is again and again quoted in the New Testament as having its fulfilment in the circumstances of our Lord's earthly life or in the history of the Church; that words from the 69th Psalm (ver. 25), and the 109th Psalm (ver. 8), are referred to by St. Peter as "the Scripture which must needs be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas." Hence instead of saying, "Let their table become a snare," "Let their habitation be made desolate," "Let them be blotted out of the book of life," &c., these interpreters would have us render, "Their table shall become a snare;" "Their habitation shall be desolate;" "They shall be blotted out of the book of life," &c.

But even if the laws of Hebrew grammar did not forbid such a rendering as the substitution of the future for the expression of a wish, it must be observed that there are imperatives which cannot be so explained: "Pour out thine indignation upon them," "Add iniquity to their iniquity," and the like. And in any case how can we put words like these into the mouth of our Blessed Lord in the hour of His passion? It was indeed true of Him, as it had been of some saint of old, that "when He was thirsty they gave Him vinegar to drink" (Psalm lxix. 21); but who can for a moment believe that thoughts of awful vengeance such as those in the psalm dwelt in the heart of the Divine Sufferer, whose every word from the cross was a word of tenderest pity and love, who did not condemn even the unrepentant robber, who prayed for His murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"?

(iv.) An ingenious attempt has indeed been made in the 109th Psalm, where the imprecations are the most awful, and the most elaborately drawn out, to escape from the difficulty by putting them into the mouth of the Psalmist's enemies and regarding them as directed against himself. At the end of the 4th verse we are to supply the word "saying," which is not uncommonly omitted in Hebrew poetry (e.g. Psalm ii. 2, xxii. 7), and to read it thus: "They have rewarded me evil for good and hatred for my good will; *saying*, Set thou an ungodly man over him," and so on through the whole string of anathemas, to ver. 20, where the Psalmist, having thus quoted the words of his enemies, com-

forts himself with the thought, "This is the reward of mine enemies from the Lord, and of them that speak evil against my soul." And it is urged in support of this interpretation that whereas the Psalmist speaks of his enemies throughout in the plural (ver. 1—5, 20 to end of the psalm), they on the other hand, speaking of him in the intermediate passage, always use the singular.*

But the admission of such an explanation, if it turns the edge of the difficulty in this particular instance, leaves all the others of a like kind untouched. We have not got rid of the impreca-
tions of the 69th Psalm, nor of the fierce exultation at the overthrow of cruel and powerful oppressors which meets us in the passages already quoted from the 58th and 137th Psalms.

(v.) To arrive at a true explanation of the difficulty we must endeavour to realise the exact position of the Jewish Psalmists. In the first place, they are not influenced by *personal* hatred. They are the mouthpiece of injured innocence. These are the accents, the natural accents, of the martyr church. The righteous are almost synonymous with the afflicted. The people of God are in so many of the psalms crushed, bowed down, mourning all the day long because of the oppression of the enemy. The enemies may be foreign tyrants, or they may be ungodly men in Israel, but in either case they are men who have obtained power and are using that power unscrupulously to oppress and destroy the faithful worshippers of Jehovah. And it is an intolerable thing to see high-handed wickedness triumphing, and to be powerless to arrest it. The true heart, on the side of God, rises up against this hateful insolence. It does long, and it does pray, for the rooting out of evil and the destruction of evil-doers. And the Psalmists give utterance to this feeling with the more intensity and the more eagerness because, the awful retributions of the future life being to a great extent hidden from their eyes, they longed to see God's justice manifested in this world in the righteous punishment of the wicked.

But, in the next place, we must frankly admit that the Old Testament stands on a lower level as regards the forgiveness of injuries than the New. Our Lord Himself draws the distinction: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you." He warned His disciples, when, like Elijah, they would have called down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans who refused to

* This is the interpretation of Kennicott and Mendelssohn, and it has been defended recently by Dr. Taylor, *The Gospel in the Law*, and by Rev. J. Hammond in the *Expositor*.

receive Him, that they knew not what spirit they were of. "He, when He was reviled, reviled not again ; when He suffered, He threatened not." His lesson to them was, "Forgive not until seven times, but until seventy-times seven." The Psalms do not inculcate the duty of forgiveness of all personal wrongs, or that clear distinction between the sinner and the sin, which is so emphatically characteristic of the New Testament. But ought we to expect it ? The Old Testament is not contrary to the New, but it is inferior to it. And this inferiority, this imperfection, is no proof that the Psalms are not inspired because they contain these execrations ; unless we regard it as an essential condition of inspiration that it should lift the subjects of it altogether above their own time and people. It was necessary that the stern sense of righteous detestation of all wrong should be planted in men's hearts, even if its harsher forms were afterwards to be softened by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

Nor must it be forgotten that even in the New Testament we find traces of the same righteous indignation. No doubt the Gospel teaches a larger charity. No doubt it forbids all personal resentment. But St. Paul when opposed in his ministry by a wicked man could find satisfaction in the thought that the Lord would reward him according to his works, and could exclaim against those whose false teaching wrought havoc in the Church, "I would they were cut off that trouble you." And St. John could bid his little children refuse to receive a false teacher into their houses. And St. Jude could write a whole epistle full of denunciation of ungodly men. And the seer of the Apocalyptic vision could write of the fall of Babylon, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged in her the blood of them that were slain upon the earth."

But although so far as the sense of righteous indignation is concerned the Psalms are not out of harmony with the teaching of the New Testament, still there is nothing in the New Testament like the elaborately wrought, detailed, and terrible anathemas of the Psalms, and it would not be lawful for us as Christians now to pray, "Oh that thou wouldest slay the wicked, O God ;" or, "Add iniquity unto their iniquity ;" "Let their prayers be turned into sin ;" "Blot them out of the book of life."

16. *The Messianic Psalms.*—There is one other subject of considerable interest connected with the theological aspect of the Psalms which must not be passed over. It is surely a striking fact that of all the quotations which in the New Testament are made from the Old touching Christ and His kingdom, nearly

one-half are drawn from the Psalms. The Psalms then are predictive; the poet is a prophet. Such psalms as the 2nd, the 20th, the 21st, the 45th, the 72nd, the 110th, where a king is the object; or such psalms as the 16th, the 22nd, the 40th, the 69th, where a prophet or a servant of God who is a sufferer for righteousness' sake are portrayed, are all quoted in the New Testament as having their fulfilment in Christ.

Yet there are expressions in some of these psalms—as in the 40th, where there is a confession of sin, “Mine iniquities are more in number than the hairs of my head;” as in the 16th, where the poet exclaims, “Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, neither take up their names (those of idols) in my lips;” as in the 69th, where the sufferer breaks forth, as has been already said, into burning imprecations—which certainly cannot be regarded as suitable on the lips of our Lord. How are we to explain these? How is it that whilst we find in these psalms words which the New Testament writers put into the mouth of our Lord or tell us are fulfilled in Him, there are yet other words which cannot possibly find such an application? Only on the principle that prophets and kings of old were types, and consequently imperfect adumbrations, of the Christ who was to come.

They spoke out their own feelings, and hence the strictly human element in their poems; but as foreshadowing the true Prophet and the true King they were carried beyond themselves. One higher and fairer than any son of man was before their eyes and in their hearts as inspired seers. Christ is in the Psalms. Who can read the 22nd Psalm without seeing there the marvellous portrait of the Divine Sufferer? The words express the real feelings of some suffering saint of God or of the suffering nation, but they go far beyond their first occasion. Where, indeed, in the world shall we find anything approaching to this exact correspondence between prophecy and fulfilment? Even in the Gospel itself we scarcely behold so consoling a vision of the crucified Redeemer as in this psalm, written centuries before He appeared upon earth.

Looking then at the Psalter as a great collection of sacred poetry, we may sum up its power and its teaching in the words of Luther.

First, as he says: “A finer book of the lives and legends of the saints has never appeared on the earth, nor ever can appear. For if we were to desire that out of all the lives, legends, and histories the best were picked out and brought together and set forth to the best advantage; why the book thus produced would be just the Psalter we now have.”

And next: "The Psalter ought to be precious and dear to us were it for nothing else but the clear promise that it holds forth respecting Christ's death and resurrection, and the prefiguration of His kingdom and of the whole state and system of Christianity; insomuch that it might be well entitled a Little Bible, wherein everything contained in the entire Bible is beautifully and briefly comprehended and compacted into an *encliridion* or manual. . . . It seems to me as if the Holy Ghost had been pleased to take on Himself the trouble of putting together such a Bible, or book of exemplars, touching the whole of Christianity or all the saints; in order that they who are unable to read the whole Bible may nevertheless find almost the whole sum comprehended in this little book."

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

1. *Constituent Parts.*—The Book of Proverbs consists of the following parts:—

(i.) The preface, chap. i. 1—7, which gives the title and indicates the design of the collection: “The Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction . . . to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion . . . that he may understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their dark sayings.” This is followed by the fundamental maxim of the Wisdom: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

(ii.) This general preface is followed by a long passage, chap. i. 8; ix. 18, which consists, not of detached proverbs, but of connected discourses in praise of Wisdom, and the benefits which she confers upon those who embrace her. The speaker is one of the wise, or a type of them, who addresses his youthful pupil or friend as “my son,” though at several places Wisdom herself is introduced speaking, displaying her graces, offering herself to men, narrating her history, and magnifying the delights which she confers on those who follow her, as well as the evils from which she preserves them. This passage includes the singular personification of Wisdom in chap. viii., one of the most remarkable and beautiful things in Hebrew literature.

(iii.) Then follows the largest section in the book, chap. x. 1—xxii. 16, with a new heading, “The Proverbs of Solomon.” This division consists of three hundred and seventy-four verses, each of which contains a single proverb or maxim in two lines, with the exception of the verse chap. xix. 7, which has three lines, owing probably to some early fault in the text. The kind of poetical parallelism most common in these verses is the antithetic, of this type:—

“A wise son maketh a glad father:
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother” (x. 1).

This type of verse prevails almost exclusively in chaps. x.—xv., after which other types are more commonly introduced, as the synonymous—

“Pride goeth before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall” (xvi. 18),

and others. The proverbs in this collection are of a very miscellaneous character, and follow one another without any classification or regard to subject, although occasionally a few consecutive verses refer to a common topic. Sometimes two proverbs occur having the first member the same (x. 15; xviii. 11), while the second is different, and in others the first member is different while the second is identical (xv. 33; xviii. 12). This peculiarity shows that many of the proverbs had circulated for a long time orally before they were gathered together in a written form.

(iv.) Then comes a collection which has been formed out of two small pieces put together. The author of the first piece, chap. xxii. 67—xxiv. 22, informs his son or disciple that what he addresses to him is, “Words of the Wise;” and the second small code, chap. xxiv. 23—24, is inscribed, “These are also by the Wise,” that is, by anonymous proverbialists. The proverbs in this collection sometimes make one verse, sometimes two or three, and sometimes extend to a short proverbial discourse.

(v.) This small code is followed by an important collection, chaps. xxv.—xxix., with the inscription, “These also are Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah, copied out” (xxv. 1). The expression “copied out” or “transferred” seems to imply that the men of Hezekiah formed their collection out of written sources. Hezekiah, besides being a wise and reforming king, appears to have been a poet (Is. xxxviii.), and his “men” were no doubt scholars and scribes who shared his literary tastes, and whom he employed to rescue from oblivion the precious remains of the ancient wisdom by transferring them from the small collections in which they lay concealed into a single code (2 Kings xviii. 37). The maxims in this code, particularly in chaps. xxv.—xxvii., approach nearer to what we should imagine the early popular proverb to have been than many of those in the other large collection, and probably the collection has preserved some of the most ancient proverbs.

(vi.) Two small pieces then follow, related to one another, chaps. xxx. and xxxi. 1—9. The superscriptions to these pieces

are obscure. Probably in both cases the suggestions of the Revised Version margin should be adopted, and chap. xxx. 1—2, read: “The words of Jakeh of Massa: the man said, I have wearied myself, O God, I have wearied myself, O God, and am consumed; surely I am more brutish than any man,” &c. The words are those of one who has striven to find out God unto perfection and found the task above him (Ps. lxxiii. 22, Job. xxviii.). In like manner chap. xxxi. 1 would read: “The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, which his mother taught him.” (The word *massa*, if a common noun, means “oracle,” as in the Revised Version text; in Gen. xxv. 14, it occurs as a proper name). The language in these two passages has an Aramean tinge, and they may have been drawn from abroad.

(vii.) Finally the book is closed by an acrostic or alphabetical poem on the “virtuous,” that is, the good or capable wife, chap. xxxi. 10—31.

2. *Literary Character.*—The Proverbs belong to that department of Hebrew literature called the Wisdom, which in addition includes Ecclesiastes, Job, and some Psalms, as xxxvii., xlix., and lxxiii. This literature is the fruit of a direction of mind in Israel frequently alluded to. The “wise” were a class about as well known as priests and prophets. It is the purpose of the Book of Proverbs to give the young man knowledge, “that he may understand the words of the Wise and their dark sayings.” The opponents of Jeremiah, who trusted to others than the prophet for direction, said: “Come, and let us devise devices against him; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the Wise, nor the word from the prophet” (Jer. xviii. 18). This peculiar kind of reflection which produced the Wisdom was not confined to Israel. In 1 Kings iv. 30, it is said of Solomon that “his wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country and all the wisdom of Egypt; for he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol.” Teman in Edom was famed for its wisdom: “Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?” (Jer. xlix. 7, Obad. 8).

Some of the negative characteristics of the Wisdom best indicate its peculiarities. Though sacrifice, for example, be once or twice alluded to, little importance is attached to the ritual system; the priest is not once mentioned, and the external exercise of worship appears to have little significance. But singularly the wise man differs as much from the prophet as he does from the lawgiver. All those ideas that specially charac-

terise prophecy are absent, such as the idea of a Kingdom of God, of a chosen people, of a Messiah or future King of the house of David, and others. The distinction between "Israel" and the "Gentiles" is not alluded to. The familiar phraseology of the prophets, "Israel," "Jacob," "Zion," "my people," "the day of the Lord," the revelation of his "glory," in a word, the whole of the language of "particularism," the idea that Israel is the peculiar people of the Lord, so characteristic of prophecy and many of the Psalms, nowhere appears. The conflict between the true worship of Jehovah and that of false gods, with which the pages of the prophets are filled, does not receive even a passing reference.

3. "*The Wise.*"—More than one suggestion has been made to account for these peculiarities of the "wise." One suggestion made is entirely without warrant. It has been argued that the "wise" were men whose way of thinking placed them outside of their dispensation and in antagonism to the circle of particularistic beliefs cherished by the prophets; in short, that they took up a humanistic or naturalistic position. A position to which the name "naturalistic" could be given is not conceivable in Israel; and there is nothing in the Proverbs to indicate any antagonism on the part of the wise either to priest or prophet. The passage (chap. iii. 9), "Honour the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of thine increase," shows their friendliness to the ritual; while the other saying, "Where there is no vision (prophetic revelation, 1 Sam. iii. 1) the people cast off restraint" (chap. xxix. 18), is proof enough of their esteem of prophecy; and the frequent references to the "law," *i.e.* revelation, the "commandment," the "word," show that their thoughts all moved within the sphere of the revealed religion.

The wise men had no unfriendliness to the institutions or public teachers of Israel; they occupied themselves, however, more with the life of the individual than of the community, and sought to distil from the teaching of the prophets, directed to their own people, general principles which, both in morals and religion, should be universally applicable. Still this universalism, acknowledged to be a peculiarity of the teaching of the wise, is a remarkable thing, and a different attempt has been made to explain it. It has been suggested that the literature of the Wisdom is late, chiefly post-Exile, and that the want of allusions to the State is due to the fact that there was now no State, only a community. The wise are the successors of the prophets, whose particularistic teaching has now lost its meaning, inasmuch as the State has perished, but whose great religious and moral truths remain, and it is the task which the wise set before

themselves to impress these truths on every member of the community.

This suggestion leaves much unexplained, and can hardly be considered satisfactory. For, first, it is certain that the class of "wise" men existed long before the Exile, and it is probable that remains of their activity should have been preserved; and undoubtedly the national tradition, as we see it reflected in the Book of Job, was that the moral wisdom was of antiquity far beyond memory. Again, though Israel was only a community after the Exile, it is certain that the national feeling remained as strong as ever, and the sense of the high privileges of "Israel" and its distinction from the "Gentiles" even grew in intensity, so that the peculiarities of the Wisdom are as difficult to explain at this time as at any other. It is at this period also that the "law" was most rigidly observed, and yet allusions to the ceremonial are entirely wanting in the Proverbs; a fact which becomes the more remarkable when it is remembered how often the author of *Ecclesiasticus*, who lived at this period, extols the "law," and insists upon its observance.

And, finally, many of the proverbs are of such a kind that they cannot have been spoken first in the post-Exile period, for example, the one already quoted: "Where no vision is the people cast off restraint" (xxix. 18). This can hardly belong to a time when prophecy had ceased. The frequent references to the "king" also suggest that the proverbs belong to the time of the monarchy, *e.g.* "My son, fear the Lord and the king" (xxiv. 21; cf. 1 Kings xxi. 10); and such a sentiment as this, "A divine sentence is on the lips of the king; his mouth shall not transgress in judgment" (xvi. 10), seems to take us back to the more ancient times in Israel, when the king actually judged causes in person (cf. xvi. 12; xx. 8). The conclusion from all this is that the historical tradition of the existence of these wise men during the whole history of Israel is to be relied on. The prophets generally arose only at great crises in the State, the "wise" pursued a calmer method, and as "reprovers" and monitors are frequently alluded to by the prophets themselves (Hos. iv. 4; Am. v. 10).

4. *Hebrew Conception of Wisdom.*—The fundamental idea of the Hebrew Wisdom is that the world is a moral constitution. Under all its phenomena and within all the history of men and all the events of the individual's life, there is a living God fulfilling Himself, His thoughts, and His will. The sacred philosopher did not rise up through nature and life unto God, he came down from God upon the world and life; he did not discover God from observing the world, he recognised Him everywhere in the world.

It was this that made his study of life so fascinating, and gave unity to it. And it was not life merely on its religious but particularly on its mental side, as an embodiment of sense or intelligence, that attracted him, for underneath every aspect of it there was a divine reality or thought, upon which it was his delight to lay his finger.

The wise man, however, does not merely observe life and give a dispassionate photograph of men and their conduct; he is a teacher, and passes judgment. Yet his observations are always good-natured, and never betray dislike of his fellow-men. He walks through the bazaars and observes the methods of Oriental marketing. "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way then he boasteth" (xx. 14). Or he observes how our natural selfishness cuts into us somewhat deeper, and describes it with a certain kindly sarcasm: "All the brothers of the poor man do hate him; much more will his neighbours go far from him" (xix. 7). Sometimes his expressions border on humour, as when he makes the sluggard express his deadly terror of labour by his cry, "There is a lion in the road! a lion in the streets!" (xxvi. 13); or describes him as too tired to lift his hand from the dish to his mouth, or too lazy to wash that which he took in hunting (xxvi. 15).

But usually he shows a kindly sympathy with the feelings of every sentient creature, which descends even to the lower creation. "A merciful man regards the natural desires of his beast" (xii. 10). Thence every emotion and natural feeling of the individual is of interest, and he sympathises with it, whether sorrow or joy: "Sorrow in the heart of a man bears him down" (xii. 25); and, on the other hand, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (xvii. 22). And he is delicate enough to perceive that however grateful the sympathy of others is to us ordinarily, there are times when we must be left alone with our own feelings. "The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with his joy" (xiv. 10). Yet, on the other hand, we live in one another, we stretch out our hands to the future, and sometimes the "half of our soul" embarks on the sea or wanders in distant lands, and we long to know how he fares. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (xiii. 12); "A good report maketh the bones fat" (xv. 30); and "As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country" (xxv. 25).

Nothing human is alien to the wise man; he is philanthropic in every sense. And all the broad distinctions created by God, as man and woman, father and child, youth and old age, he dwells upon as each beautiful in its place, and seizes on that

in each which constitutes its charm. “A gracious woman attains to honour, as strong men attain to wealth” (xi. 10); that indescribable delicacy in women which is the complement of strength in man, and secures her her place, the philosopher signalises at once, and almost with rudeness indicates that beauty cannot compensate for the want of it: “As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is beauty in a woman without discretion” (xi. 22). Similarly, “The glory of young men is their strength; the glory of old men is the grey head” (xx. 29). Why the glory of old men is the hoary head is explained elsewhere: “The hoary head is a crown of glory; it is found in the way of righteousness” (xvi. 31), for “the fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened” (x. 27).

5. *The Sense of God’s Presence*.—If now, passing from the beauty and charm of all the forms of individual life, we inquire how the individual should bear himself, what habits of mind he should cherish, we enter the region of duty, and touch on the fundamental idea of the Wisdom, that all is of God. The prevailing feeling in the mind should be the fear of the Lord, and out of this will grow the other states of mind that are right. One of the first of these will be humility, not as a temperament, but as a religious condition of the mind before God. “When pride cometh, then cometh shame” (xi. 2). “By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honour and life” (xxii. 4); “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (xx. 9.)

This abiding sense of God’s presence will reveal itself in the whole life, in a general gravity of deportment, in self-restraint, in thoughtful consideration and slowness to speak, and even in a dignified manner of speech, unlike the levity and want of thought and hasty talk of the fool. “He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly” (xiv. 17); “An equal temper is the life of the flesh, but keenness of mind is the rottenness of the bones” (xiv. 30); “He that is slow to anger is greater than a hero, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (xvi. 32); “The heart of the righteous meditates in order to answer, but the mouth of the wicked bubbleth over with evil things” (xv. 28); “The tongue of the righteous gracefully uttereth knowledge, but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness” (xv. 2); “Wise men reserve knowledge, but the mouth of the fool is an imminent downfall” (x. 14).

On another side this sense of the nearness of God stimulated to activity and diligence. Man’s task was to bring himself into harmony with God, whom he felt to be everywhere present, and

to realise His purpose. Hence the encomiums passed on diligence: "The hand of the diligent maketh rich;" "Love not sleep lest thou come to poverty;" "In all labour there is gain" (x. 4; xx. 13; xiv. 23).

Of course it is in intercourse with men that the disposition can best be seen, and must be judged. The disposition required, to state it in a single word, is charity, philanthropy in the widest sense. Nothing is more beautiful than the considerate kindness of the wise man. Looking abroad upon all the classes of men his eye alights upon the poor, with compassion for the unrelieved monotony of their life, in which there are no good and bad days as in that of other men: "All the days of the poor are bad" (xv. 15), and he puts in a plea for their kindly treatment: "He that hath mercy on the poor happy is he" (xiv. 21).

Nay, regarding the various orders of society as the creation of God, he who despairs any of them seems to him to slight Jehovah himself: "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker," while, on the other hand, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will He pay him again" (xiv. 31; xix. 17). But the bearing of each man among his fellow-men should be characterised by a wide human goodness. In the presence of others he will be courteous: "A soft answer turneth away wrath." He esteems others highly: "He who despiseth his neighbour is a fool" (xi. 12). And should evil rumours regarding others reach his ear he will give them no further currency. "He that divulges a slander is a fool" (x. 18). In a word, he looks with kindly consideration on all men, and makes allowance for their faults: "Charity covereth a multitude of sins" (x. 12).

6. *Moral Scope of the Book.*—It has sometimes been said that the motive set before men in the Proverbs when they are exhorted to strive after wisdom is not a lofty one, being usually material well-being. The answer to this charge is that it is by no means universally true, and where it is true it is largely explained by differences between Hebrew modes of thinking and our own. When Wisdom says—

"My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold,
And my revenue than choice silver" (viii. 19),

she is conscious of offering men something more precious than material well-being.

And even when material good is presented as the reward of wisdom it must be remembered that material good had a larger meaning to the Hebrew than to us. For, first, he did not draw

that distinction between the "soul," or spiritual side of our nature, and all other sides which we draw; the whole "man" in its unity was the subject which had to be satisfied; and this required a material sphere and material blessings. And, secondly, as all these blessings came directly from the hand of God, and His presence was recognised in them, they had a sort of sacramental meaning to the ancient saint; they were the tokens and seal to him of God's favour, and needful to assure him that he possessed it. His fundamental idea, that the universe was a moral constitution, led him to see moral principles always realised in the external world, and this was so much the case, that when adversity befell him he saw in it the anger of God. And it is here, no doubt, that is found the explanation of the absence of any formal doctrine of immortality in the Proverbs, and any idea of "another world."

To the Hebrew mind God was in every phenomenon and in every event in the universe; He was present in the whole life of man, and there could be no "other" world. The world was one and God filled it. It was not defect but excess of religion that postponed so long the doctrine of immortality. Only when death called men away from the enjoyment of God's presence here, or when great miseries and the evils of life taught them that full blessedness in His fellowship could not be enjoyed on earth, or when a deepening sense of sin convinced them that that purity of heart needful to see God could not be attained in the present conditions of life—only then did the thought of another sphere of life with God arise and grow into clearness. When, however, such a statement is made in Proverbs as this:

"In the way of righteousness is life,
And the pathway thereof is immortality" (xii. 28),

it would be a very superficial reading that found nothing more in it than a reference to occasions of danger in a man's life. It is the statement of a principle; and other parts of revelation show how the principle is to be reconciled with facts, such as that of death, which seem to contradict it.

7. *God's World-Plan.*—It has been said that the fundamental conception of the Wisdom is that the world, including the life of man, is a moral constitution, in all the phenomena of which God is present and realising Himself. All things are but the innumerable reflections, infinitely various in their colours, of one great divine idea. This idea, however, is especially reflected in the social order and moral life of man. The single proverbs exhibit in a great variety of ways individual illustrations of this. But in chaps. i.—ix., the general idea of God's world-plan or

world-conception, particularly on its moral side, is seized and personified and presented as a Being, Wisdom herself. This figure, chaste and beautiful, with the serenity of order upon her face, and truth and religion in her eyes, the divine Wisdom which may also become man's, is set forth in contrast with Folly who too often takes the shape of the "strange woman" or the brigand murderer who lurks in the thickets (chaps. i., vii.).

The traits of this exquisite picture of Wisdom are borrowed from a hundred sources, from the moral conditions of the time, from the usages of the religious teachers of the day, from the social order and public life in the city; yet not from these as superficial phenomena, unsubstantial shadows that come and go, but as all of them expressions of an invisible whole, the moral framework of the human economy, image of the mind of God. It is in chap. viii. where this personification attains its most brilliant form. First, (1—3) Wisdom is introduced as a public teacher, and the places are described where she takes her stand and speaks. She stands on the "high places," the Temple heights, where the crowds may be addressed as they pass; or at the gates, where justice was dispensed, and life was most intense. Then (4—11) Wisdom herself speaks, naming those whom she desires to hear her, and to whom she offers herself:—

"Unto you, O men, I call;
And my voice is unto the sons of men. . . .
Receive my instruction and not silver;
And knowledge rather than choice gold."

Then, 12—31, she states how she manifests herself:—

"I, Wisdom, indwell in prudence,
Counsel is mine and sound wisdom:
I am understanding; I have power.
In me kings rule, and princes decree justice.
In me princes are princes, and rulers all the judges of the earth."

Prudence is a form in which Wisdom reveals herself. That society is organised, that intelligence and rule are exercised, that there are offices and officers dispensing right—these things are embodiments of her. She is the substratum of intelligence and of godliness, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: "pride and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate." And then, having said that she was ready to bestow herself on them who had received her—"I love them who love me"—her own image seems to fill her mind, and she speaks of her own past, when she was alone with God, or ever the earth was; when she was His workman in creation, which was but herself taking shape in the magical play of her power:—

“The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way,
 The first of his works of old.
 I was set up of old from the beginning,
 Or ever the earth was.

“When He set up the heavens I was there :
 When he drew a circle on the face of the deep :
 When He made firm the skies above
 When he marked out the foundations of the earth :
 Then was I with him as his workman,
 And day by day was I full of delights,
 Playing before him at all times ;
 Playing in his habitable earth,
 And my delights were with the sons of men.”

Wisdom was with God from the beginning, or ever the earth was ; she was the first of His works. Also she was present at creation, not as a spectator, but as an artificer ; the work of creation was but Wisdom realising herself and taking form ; creation is the embodiment of her movements, as with an intoxicating joy she played before God ; and there, where her delights were highest and her realisation of herself most perfect, was in the habitable earth, the moral world of the sons of men.

8. *Wisdom as Teacher*.—This very remarkable chapter presents, first, Wisdom as a teacher addressing men. The exquisite picture could have been drawn only by combining many materials together, such as the public teaching of the prophets, the conversational instruction of the wise, the procedure of the law courts in the gates, and the many lessons of social order and life which the thronging thoroughfares presented. These are the things that swell the voice of Wisdom : she is the personification of everything that had a voice to speak to men and impress upon them the principles of divine order in the world. Her voice gathers into itself the many voices continually sounding in men's ears, the voice of public life, of an orderly society, of revelation, or, in a word, of the whole course of things.

This is Wisdom the teacher, and her theme is herself, Wisdom the thing. There is such a thing. Within the sphere of life and the world there is a divine framework upon which all things are built. The principles of the economy of the human race and the world in which it is placed form a well-ordered organism, immaterial but not hidden ; it speaks with a thousand tongues of revelation and of life, and what it speaks of in the ears of men is itself.

Finally, this organic frame of principles, now realised in the economy of man, had its origin in God ; it was from the beginning. God gave it being as the first of His works. It was His creation-plan, His world-conception, which He projected out of

His own mind. Hence it is idealised as having subsistence of its own beside God, and His purpose to realise it is considered a capacity of its own to effectuate itself, which it does in creation. It is God's artificer in creation; it plays before Him, and its play is creation. Every movement embodies itself in some creative work. And there, where the divine beauty of its movements was most conspicuous and its delights deepest, was in the habitable earth and the moral economy of the sons of men. Though the Wisdom here be as yet only a personification and not a person, there is no doubt that the profound conception was taken up among the other Messianic thoughts of Israel, to which it gave vaster scope, suggesting the relation of the Messiah to creation and the universe; and the things said here of Wisdom are seen verified in the Son of God: "The Word was with God;" "All things were made by Him;" and "He is before all things, and in Him do all things subsist."

9. *The Age of the Different Collections.*—The Proverbs are chiefly maxims touching life on its religious and moral side. These maxims, being of such infinite variety, and the fruit of such a wide observation and reflection, cannot be the production of an individual mind. Many of them may well be by Solomon, and a great number may belong to his age; but though the stream of wisdom began to flow in his day, it gathered volume as time advanced. In the book which now exists we find gathered together the most precious fruits of the Wisdom in Israel during many centuries, and no doubt the later centuries were richer, or at least fuller, in their contributions than the earlier.

There is no reason to doubt the historical worth of the headings to chaps. xxv., xxix., "Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah copied out." We have here a historical guarantee that this collection was made in the eighth century, and possibly it may be the oldest of the codes now contained in the book. Many of the proverbs in this case contain a comparison; and as the word "proverb" signifies "comparison," this was probably the oldest form. Some of these comparisons are of great beauty: "An earthen vessel glazed with silver dross; so are fervent lips and a bad heart" (xxvi. 23); "A city that is broken down and without walls, so is he that hath no rule over his own spirit" (xxv. 28); "A trampled fountain and a fouled spring, is a righteous man who giveth way before the evil" (xxv. 26).

Almost all the proverbs that have entered into our own language have been taken from this collection, such as "Iron sharpeneth iron;" "As face answereth to face;" "The dog is returned to his vomit;" "Bray a fool in a mortar;" phrases

like "Heap coals of fire on his head," "Singing songs to a weary heart," "The curse causeless," "The fear of man bringeth a snare," "A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back," and many more.

As to the code (chaps. i.—ix.), though the general preface (1—7) has "Proverbs of Solomon," the recurrence of this heading at chap. x. implies that chaps. i.—ix. were not considered Solomonic. These chapters form a general introduction to the Proverbs properly so-called. The descriptions given of Wisdom taking her stand by the broadways and at the gates, and there addressing the crowds of men (chaps. i., viii.), as well as the figure of the "strange woman" prowling in the streets at nightfall (chap. vii.), suggest that the writer had the idea of a large and populous city present to his mind. This city could be no other than Jerusalem, and Jerusalem before its destruction. The miserable city of the Restoration could not, until many generations after the return from exile, have afforded materials or the writer's picture, for in Nehemiah's days, nearly a century after the return of the first exiles, great part of the city was still in ruins (Neh. vii. 4). Probably, therefore, these chapters were written some time before the destruction of the city (586), and about a century after Hezekiah made his collection.

The age of the code, chaps. x.—xxii., is difficult to determine. It has been usually considered the oldest, but the arguments used in support of this view are very precarious. The extremely miscellaneous nature of the collection, the repetitions in it, and the frequent occurrence of proverbs which are but modifications of others, are proofs that it contained elements belonging to very different periods. When we find one proverb repeated verbally (xiv. 12 = xvi. 25), a number of others having the first member identical but differing in the second, and conversely a number having the second member identical but differing in the first, we are led to infer that many of the proverbs, before coming into the collection, had a long history of oral transmission, during which they underwent great changes; that, like defaced coins, they were thrown into the mint and came forth with a new image and superscription to circulate again among men; and that the collection as a whole has been drawn largely from oral sources. While many of the maxims in such a code may be very ancient, the code itself as a collection may be pretty late. There is nothing in the contents which would compel us to bring it in its present form below the Exile; at the same time it is possible that this great collection may have been open to receive later additions. There is little in the other collections to suggest any precise date, although some of the smaller pieces, particularly the closing alphabetical poem, may be late.

ECCLESIASTES; OR, THE PREACHER.

1. *Plan and Aim of the Book.*—The title of this book in Hebrew is Kohéleth, a word of somewhat uncertain meaning. Literally it would mean, “one who calls together an assembly;” but, as the assembly of the people was called together to be addressed, the term may mean “the addresser” or teacher, or as we say, the preacher. In this sense the Greek translator took it, rendering “Ecclesiastes,” he who addresses the ecclesia—assembly or congregation of the people.

The book has many peculiarities, but several things are suggested by a mere reading of the work. First, the book has a general idea running through it. It is no collection of unconnected fragments, nor mere reflections which the author has transferred from a note-book, or which some one has found in a note-book and given out after the author’s death. In some parts of the book the connection may appear loose, but that the author had a general idea in his mind, towards the illustration of which all his examples and musings converge, is in no way to be questioned.

Another thing plain from the book is that the author’s aim was practical, and not exclusively speculative. He is a teacher. This is common to him with all Hebrew authors. He has his countrymen before him, and he means to convey a lesson to them to guide them in life in the age and circumstances in which he and they lived. This is evident both from the name which he gives himself and from the concluding references to himself (xii. 9, 10). No doubt he touches on various mysteries, matters which have been subjects of speculation at all times, but he does not pursue these matters out of a speculative interest in them merely, but rather to discover and to teach how human life should be lived in the face of them. It is also true that there is a large personal element in the book: it is the author’s confessions; but

he is not solitary in his perplexities, he only gives expression to what many felt. His peculiar state of mind is the product of two general causes, the wretched conditions under which human life was led in his day, and a general religious tone of mind. And both these things must have been common to him with his contemporaries.

2. *Character of the Author.*—From the practical aim of the book it follows that it is everywhere serious. Its aim is moral. There is no dialectical play or word-fencing in it. Ideas are not set up in order to be overturned, nor theories broached in order to be reduced *ad absurdum*. The author nowhere poses or plays the advocate; he is deeply in earnest throughout. Neither is he, as he has often been called, a sceptic. He is baffled before the great problem of God's providential rule of the world, so baffled that action was paralysed; at least he was driven to a mood of mind to which all activity seemed useless, and a passive and quiet enjoyment of whatever good life offered the only reasonable course; but he never doubts any of the great truths commonly believed among his people. He holds fast his faith in God, and even in His moral rule of the world, though his failure to see the latter operating as he would expect is the cause of his perplexity and weariness. But even this mood of weariness gives way before his practical sense, and he counsels men to throw themselves into the stream of human enterprise, undeterred by the uncertainties that may hang over the result of their efforts (xi. 1—6).

It is possible that his gloom of mind from being an effect became also a cause, and threw its own sombre shade over some beliefs or hopes prevailing or beginning to prevail in Israel. He is not unacquainted, for example, with the idea of an immortality of the spirit of man in the presence of God, but the hope is too uncertain to build upon (iii. 20, 21; comp. ix. 1—6). Yet even this negative attitude could scarcely be called scepticism, for though minds like Job and the Psalmists had occasionally divined such an idea in moments of strong faith, it had not yet risen into a fixed belief. The author's position appears to remain the same throughout the whole book. There is no evidence of a struggle in his mind between faith and doubt, in which faith achieves the victory; much less are the difficulties and apparent contradictions of the book to be explained by the assumption that it contains the utterances of "two voices," one doubting and the other believing.

3. *His Philosophy of Life.*—The author states the general conception of his book in the opening verses: All is vanity; what gain is there to man in all the labour in which he labours under

the sun ? In other words, human life is without result. And this general truth in regard to human life is also a truth in regard to all things—all things move in an endless round, and nothing results from the movement. The sun rises and sets, and he again rises and sets. The wind circles from north to south, and it returns upon its circuits. All the rivers run into the sea, and the sea is not full ; the rivers run into the sea. All things recur, and there is nothing new, no advance made, under the sun. If a thing happens of which it is said, this is new, it is not new ; it has been long ago, only the past is forgotten, and so that which is now present will be forgotten in the time to come (i. 1—11).

Then the author narrates how he reached this conclusion, and the practical truth at which he arrived in consequence. First, he set himself to inquire by wisdom into all the works which men do under the sun, and he found that all was vanity and without result, for—

“ That which has been made crooked cannot be straightened,
And that which is wanting cannot be numbered ” (i. 15, vii. 13).

Man finds himself imprisoned in a fixed system, the evils of which he is without power to amend. And the very knowledge of this evil system which the author has gained by his study, or as he says, “ by wisdom,” is itself of no use and a striving after the wind—

“ For in much wisdom is much grief,
And he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow ” (i. 12—18).

Secondly, having failed to find by study of human activity, any form of life that yielded any gain, the author had recourse to another experiment, he tried pleasure. He denied himself no joy, and revelled in all the pleasures which man can procure for himself (not as a vulgar sensualist, for his wisdom remained with him, ii. 3—9) ; but the experiment was as fruitless as before—

“ I said of laughter, It is mad ;
And of mirth, What doeth it ? ” (ii. 2.)

This also was vanity. No doubt when wisdom and folly were compared together there was an advantage of a kind in wisdom ; yet the advantage was no permanent one, “ for as the fool dieth, so dieth the wise man.” There being, therefore, no profit or permanent gain in life, however it be lived, the practical conclusion drawn by the author is this : “ There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labour ” (ii. 24).

This is no recommendation of a sensual life : it is a recommendation of a sober enjoyment of life while it lasts, in the fear of God, for this is what God has given to man upon the earth (comp. Jer. xxii. 15). And even this *is* the gift of God. Man has no power over anything else, and even over this he has no power, unless God confer the power of enjoyment upon him (ii. 25, 26). For (chapter iii.) all the events of human life are in the hand of God ; man has no power over them more than he has over the wind (viii. 8). There is a time to be born, and a time to die ; a time to weep, and a time to laugh ; a time to love, and a time to hate ; all is in the hand of God, whether it be love or hatred ; man knoweth it not—all is “before them” (ix. 1). “Whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever ; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it ; and God hath made it that men should fear before him” (iii. 14). Even the evils of life, the injustice and wickedness, are there by God’s determination (though this does not remove the culpability of men, whom God made upright) ; but they have sought out many inventions (vii. 29). His time will come for judging them, for there is a time for everything ; and so far as men are concerned they are intended “to prove them,” and to teach them what they are, nothing better than beasts ; for one occurrence, even death, happens to men and beasts : “Who knoweth the spirit of man whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth ?” (iii. 16—21).

This, then, is the author’s meaning when he says that all is vanity ; not quite that which we mean. It is not that the world is unsatisfying, and that the human soul craves something higher than the world can give. It is that all men’s efforts are without result. One can accumulate no gain, can perform nothing that can be called an addition to things. His spirit is larger than his sphere. All is vanity because man is not free, because he is confined by a fixed determination of everything on all sides of him by God. He cannot shape any destiny for himself. The vanity is a universal one, because the spirit of man over against God and his determination of all things is impotent, can effect nothing, change nothing, cannot even comprehend the scheme of which it is a fixed part. All that such a being as man can do is to enjoy what of life is good, for this is that which God has given him in his life of vanity.

4. *Date and Style.*—Although there is much that is personal here, particularly in the deep feeling, and the gloom bordering on despair, of the writer’s mind, there are some general points evident enough, which help to explain his particular state of mind. One point is, the wretched condition of society in his day ; and another

is, the general religious tone of his time. The date of the book cannot be accurately fixed. It is allowed on all hands to be very late, almost the latest work in the Canon. The language and style cannot be explained on any other supposition.* Although in the beginning of the book the experiments on life seem to be made by Solomon, this transparent disguise is very soon abandoned. Solomon is but the ideal of one possessing the highest wisdom and having the most unbounded resources at his command ; and in the epilogue the Preacher is merely one of the wise (xii. 9). The book may almost with certainty be assumed to be earlier than the great outburst of national spirit and religious hopes in the middle of the second century B.C. On the other hand, it is probably not earlier than towards the end of the fourth century. This period from 350 to 150 may be called the dark age of Jewish history, and some time in the course of it Ecclesiastes was written.

5. *Condition of Society.*—Though the particular circumstances that press with such a crushing weight upon the heart of the Preacher are unknown, the veil which he partially lifts from the condition of the world in his day reveals great miseries under which men groaned : injustice in the judgment seat, rapacity of rulers, neglect and persecution of the righteous, and triumph of the strong. The evils of life were such as to cause men to despair. “ Then I turned and saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun, and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter ; and on the side of their oppressors there was power ; but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive ; yea, better than both did I esteem him which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun ” (iv. 1 *seq.* ; comp. iii. 16, 17 ; viii. 2 ; x. 5—7, 16, 17, 20).

These passages give a picture of the time. And against such evils the writer felt himself impotent. He was a member of a subject race. Even his own people were probably disunited in sentiment and aim. Mankind seemed to him a heap of atoms without coherence, with no destiny, like fishes of the sea which are taken in an evil net (ix. 12). A hopeless individualism met him everywhere.

6. *Externalism in Religion.*—But another thing also helped to determine his state of mind. A tendency to externalise in religion was the necessary result of the introduction of the strict legalistic constitution at the return from exile. Men put the

* See the proofs in Delitzsch's Commentary (Clark's translation).

law between them and God ; they obeyed the law, not God. Further, the very loftiness of the conception of God now reached was in a certain sense dangerous to religion. God became a transcendent omnipotence, far removed from human life. The Preacher never uses the name Jehovah, the living God of the people, but always the abstract "God." Many things show this tendency to remove God away from men's life ; for example, the great development of the doctrine of angels, who acted as intermediaries between God and men.

The Preacher's doctrine of predestination is another instance of the same thing. Instead of the living God who of old was present in every movement of the people's history, there is a cold impersonal "purpose" of a distant mind everywhere fulfilling itself. The Preacher is a religious man, a reverent man ; the fear of God is strong in his mind, but his religion is reflective merely. He has not that intense feeling of being in fellowship with a living person which Job and the Psalmists had, and which enabled them to force their way through the anomalies of providence to the living God behind it, or to open up as a religious necessity a world beyond death. Job appeals from God to God, from the God whom he identified with providence to the God with whom his spirit had fellowship ; but the Preacher knows only the former God, Him whom he learns to know by reflecting on the world and the life of men.

7. *Viewed in the Light of Greek Philosophy.*—Nothing could be more inept than to look upon Ecclesiastes as reflecting the ideas of Greek philosophy, whether Stoical or Epicurean. The coincidences of phraseology are merely literary, not technical. Nor can the terms Stoic or Epicurean be applied to him in their proper sense. One who in answer to the question, What is good for man in his life ? says, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting ; . . . sorrow is better than laughter" (vii. 1—6), was at least no vulgar sensualist. Neither is there a trace of Stoicism in the book. On the contrary, it teaches that he who is wise will use every effort to obviate and alleviate the evils of life.

The work is a genuine product of the Hebrew Wisdom. Its fundamental principle is the same as that in the Proverbs and in Job, viz., that God is in all things that occur. But when this principle in a time of prosperity and well-being gave unspeakable joy to the pious mind, and while even in times of adversity and oppression, such as those in which Job and the Psalmist lived, a powerful personal faith was able to use it to wring out great religious principles from it, when the times were evil and faith also feeble, the principle that God determined

everything produced a sense of impotency in the mind which compelled men to conclude that human life was without result. The Preacher's conception of God is too much that of reflection for him to say either with the Psalmist, " Nevertheless I am continually with thee" (Psalm lxxiii. 23), or with Job, " I know that my redeemer liveth, and that I shall see God" (xix. 25); but he holds fast to faith in God, in His moral rule, however obscurely it is to be seen, and in human duty. Job and the Psalmists threw themselves upon the anomalies of providence with a religious energy that was determined to get rid of them. The Preacher knows that they are not to be got rid of. Hence the greater part of his book consists of considerations which tend to show either that the evils have some element of good in them, or how to obviate them.

In one respect he makes an advance on older models by drawing the evils of life into life itself, and showing how they have a disciplinary character. Thus even the gross injustice of rulers has the effect of " proving" men (iii. 16); and even a bad government is better than anarchy (v. 8). And on the other side, the things that seem good to men, such as riches, have evils attending them that overbalance the good (vi. 10—17). In general the Preacher recommends a certain prudence and moderation of mind, a wise circumspectness of conduct in all departments of life. Even in religion a man ought to be calm and meditative (v. 1—7). So in regard to evil rulers a wise man will not hastily take part in conspiracies, but wait the judgment of God upon their injustice (viii. 1—7). And in regard to present evils it is foolish to be sentimental over them, and ask why the former days were better than these (vii. 10). The good that there is in the present is to be enjoyed in the fear of God (iii. 14; v. 6; vii. 18), for God will judge every human life (ix. 1—10); and rising above his own philosophy, the Preacher inculcates diligence and a prudent enterprise, without gloomy forecasts in regard to success or failure (xi. 1—6; ix. 10).

8. *The Preacher and His Age.*—No book of Scripture can be justly estimated apart from the age to which it belongs. Every part of Scripture is practical, speaking to the condition of men's minds at the time when it was written. The Preacher belonged to Israel's dark age. The reflecting religion of his day differed from the intuitionist fervid religion of the prophets, as much as the colourless piety of the eighteenth century did from the faith of the Reformation, which immediately embraced God. But the apologetics of the eighteenth century were suitable to the time. And the Preacher, when rightly understood,

is seen to furnish a powerful apologetic for his time. His deep sympathy with men in their sorrows, and the undertone of melancholy in his mind, enables him to speak with effect. He has gauged the evil fully. Then in spite of the evil his faith in God and His moral rule, and in human duty, remains unshaken (iii. 17; viii. 12 *seq.*; xi. 9). And the wise practical counsel which he offers, his kaleidoscopic handling of the elements of human life, showing the good side of what is usually thought evil, and the evil side of what is considered good—all this was fitted to give a firmer tone to men's minds.

9. The Preacher rejects the idea of what we call "culture," a disciplining of the individual mind by reflection and the experiences of life. A culture to which death put an end could not satisfy a spirit like his. Then he was too sick at heart to cherish the conception of a progress of the race, a widening of its life in the circuit of the suns. Society was too disintegrated, and the first principle of moral order too habitually disregarded for such an idea to sustain itself. Again he was not certain of a conscious immortality of the individual. And he was still entangled in the belief, which was the cross of all afflicted men in Israel, that the outward lot of men in the world was a true reflection of the mind of God towards them. The Preacher prepares for Christianity by showing the need of it. He is a voice "crying in the night." His cry may justly be called prophetic. The light and immortality brought to light in the Gospel would have changed his "vanity of vanities" into an activity of gladness. When Christ said, "God is spirit, and they that worship must worship Him in spirit," He not only stated a necessity, He gave a definition. Religion is fellowship with God in spirit. And to one having this fellowship the world no more appears, as it did to the Preacher, an external machine, crushing him to pieces; he feels himself with God at the centre of it, and can say to his soul, All things are yours.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

1. *Characteristics.*—The Song remains the most obscure book in Scripture. It is impossible not to feel the charm of its poetry and be delighted by its intense love of nature, a feeling which the poetry of the Hebrews alone among ancient nations exhibits in common with modern poetry. The wealth and luxuriousness of language at the command of the writer in describing the aspects and objects of nature is astonishing, as well as the depth of his feeling for its beauties. It is also easy to perceive from the continuous dialogue carried on in the book that it is of the nature of a lyrical drama, although it may never have been intended, as some writers think that it was, to be actually represented. And finally, it can be perceived at once that the subject celebrated in the book is love (chapter viii. 5—7). But beyond this it is difficult to go with any certainty.

2. *Methods of Interpretation; the Allegorical.*—The earliest known method of interpreting the book was the Allegorical. The love of Solomon and the Shulamite set forth in a figure the love of Jehovah to His people Israel. Traces of this method of interpretation among the Palestinian Jews are found in the Fourth Book of Ezra, about the end of the first century A.D. And the method is fully developed in the Chaldee translation (in the case of this book rather a paraphrase), which, though not itself early, may be presumed to have preserved the early tradition. The book was interpreted by reading into it the whole history of the people of Israel from the Exodus to the perfect times of the Messiah. From the Jews this method passed over to the early Christian Church, naturally with the difference that the book became an allegory of the love between Christ and the Church or the individual soul.

The great theologians of the early and mediæval Church commented on the book in this sense with a voluminousness perhaps not surprising considering that they read into it their own mysticism. Origen's work on the Song extended to ten volumes;

and Bernard in eighty-six sermons had only reached chapter iii. 1, when he was arrested by death. And the same view has been presented with great religious depth and beauty in modern times, sometimes to illustrate the pious soul's experiences, and sometimes as a prophetic prefiguration of the life of Christ or the history of the Church.

Apart, however, from the not very great suitableness of making Solomon represent Christ, the theory fails to take any account of the realistic nature of the book, and leaves very much unexplained. The "little sister" might be heathenism, but who are the sixty queens and eighty concubines? (vi. 8.) And the book itself offers not the slightest hint that it is prophetical. A somewhat different turn has been given by some to the allegory by the assumption that the Shulamite represented "wisdom," and that the love between her and Solomon set forth the wise monarch's devotion to sacred philosophy.

3. *The Typical Method.*—As early as the fifth century Theodore of Mopsuestia, the great Syrian exegete, protested against the allegorical interpretation, though the protest was so little to the taste of the Church of his day that it brought him after his death under ecclesiastical censure. From the seventeenth century, however, there began to prevail a view of the book which might be called the Typical. In the allegorical method Solomon and the Shulamite were mere figures representing higher subjects; the Typical interpretation recognised that there was a real relation of love between the historical king and the Shulamite, also an actual person, but considered that this love was a type of a spiritual relation, according to the Apostle's words regarding marriage, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Eph. v. 32). The Shulamite was supposed by some to be Pharaoh's daughter, the wife of Solomon (Grotius); by other more modern writers a Galilean maiden whom he made his queen (Delitzsch). This theory distinguished between a primary historical sense and a higher typical spiritual sense. A true chaste human love was celebrated in the book, though with the design of suggesting a relation of love which was divine. It was natural when this footing in a historical sense of the book had been gained to drop the supposed typical reference more and more out of view, and to prosecute a closer inquiry into the primary meaning.

4. *Exegetical Difficulties.*—The interpretations hitherto alluded to had assumed that the words of endearment in the book were all spoken by Solomon and the Shulamite in regard to one another. But this view encounters great difficulties. It requires us to suppose that the king is introduced in the guise of a shep-

herd or at least a rustic youth, which is extremely unnatural, besides being inconsistent with other passages where he is called king and represented as surrounded by a royal retinue. It therefore becomes of consequence to inquire who the interlocutors are in the poem.

Of these there are certainly three, Solomon, the Shulamite, and the daughters of Jerusalem, presumably the ladies of the court. In chapter iii. 6 other persons are introduced expressing their admiration of the royal palanquin and retinue seen advancing in the distance, but they are mere spectators and play no part in the piece. In chapter vi. 10 the queens and concubines who exclaim, "Who is this that looks forth like the dawn?" are probably to be identified with the "daughters of Jerusalem." In chapter viii. 8 the Shulamite's brothers are represented as speaking of their sister, but their words are merely recorded by her. She refers to these brothers more than once, and also to her mother; but none of them actually appears upon the scene. It is a question, however, whether there be not a fourth person who is frequently alluded to by the Shulamite, and who on several occasions actually speaks. The Shulamite is supposed to allude to this absent person in the very first words of the poem, verses 1-4, drawing a distinction between him and the king (verse 4). She has been brought into the king's court, the royal ladies are present, verses 5-8, but the king does not appear till verse 9. He addresses her in terms of admiration, verses 9-11, but she indirectly repels his advances by saying, "While the king was (absent) in his divan my spikenard sent forth the smell thereof," that is, the thought of her absent beloved, whom she compares to a bunch of henna flowers, filled her mind with delight. It is to this person that she refers, ii. 8, describing him as "coming skipping upon the hills"—an odd description of a king—and between whom and her the dialogue is carried on, ii. 10-17. It is in regard to this person that the daughters of Jerusalem say to her, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" (v. 9, vi. 3)—a question which they could hardly have put in regard to King Solomon.

5. *Views of Modern Writers.*—Following the clue supplied by these and other passages, modern writers have come to the conclusion that the "beloved" of the Shulamite is not Solomon, but a youth who had won her affections before she accidentally encountered the royal chariot and engaged the attention of the king (vi. 10-13). This view gives an entirely different aspect to the poem. With whatever modifications it then becomes the celebration of a pure affection, which holds out against the temptations of a court, and rises superior to all the seductive arts

even of a monarch. To narrate such a history cannot have been the author's design merely with the view of giving pleasure; his purpose must have been moral; and this moral purpose can hardly have been any other than to protest against the licentiousness of Solomon's court, and to lead men back to simplicity and purity and the law of nature in the relations of men and women.

As such a work could scarcely have come from the hand of Solomon himself, nor from the hand of a subject during his day, and as its language and allusions appear to betray a northern origin, some political motive may have concurred with the primary moral one. This motive could only be to make the royal house of Judah and its rule odious, with the view of strengthening the basis of the newly-formed state in the north. When we remember that the northern kingdom had in some sense the sanction of the prophets of God, such a political motive could hardly be held to detract from the dignity of the poem.

At all events, the question whether the "beloved" of the Shulamite be another than Solomon is one for investigation to settle. No objection could be urged against the poem if its design was to teach the moral lesson just referred to. Men are always, by their luxury and selfishness, found perverting the simplicity of nature; and that which Christ thought it needful strongly to insist upon and make an imperative law of his kingdom, cannot be held beneath the dignity or outside the purpose of the Old Testament to teach. It has always been felt difficult to reconcile the laxity of morals with the elevation of the religion of the Old Testament saints, and it would not be without satisfaction that we found the great fundamental law of nature, now drawn up into Christianity, already insisted upon in this book.

6. *Date and Authorship.*—It must be acknowledged that among those who hold the theory of the book just stated there exists great diversity of opinion as to the interpretation of individual passages. The theory almost of necessity excludes the Solomonic authorship; the book would be about Solomon, not by him. The language of the poem and its allusions are considered to be rather in favour of a northern than a Judean origin. The reference to Tirzah along with Jerusalem (vi. 4) has been thought to point to the time when the former city was the capital of the northern kingdom (1 Kings xiv. 17; xvi. 8, 15) before Samaria was built by Omri (1 Kings xvi. 24; *i.e.* before 920 B.C., but after the disruption of the kingdom under Rehoboam). On the other hand, some of the peculiarities of language are just those which characterised the post-Exile period; and there are some expressions, *e.g.* Pardes (Paradise), which are Persian, and their

occurrence at so early a period awakens doubt. Altogether it must be acknowledged that much obscurity still continues to hang over both the date and the interpretation of the book.

In the Revised Version the spaces left between the verses indicate the different speakers.

A few notes will suggest how the poem is read on the modern view:—

Chapter i. 2—ii. 7: Shulamite, daughters of Jerusalem, king. (Shulamite, 2—4, speaks of the beloved, who is absent; 9—11, the king addresses her; 12—14, she indirectly repels him. If 15—ii. 3 be a dialogue between her and the king, he must be understood to speak to her, while she speaks of the beloved, who is absent.)

Chapter ii. 8—iii. 5: Shulamite, daughters of Jerusalem. (8—14, Shulamite narrates a visit of the beloved and his words, and her own reply, 15—17. The words, 15, are supposed to be a verse of a vineyard song; iii. 1—5, Shulamite narrates a dream or an occurrence.)

Chapter iii. 6—iv. 6: Spectators, king, Shulamite. (6—11, spectators of the approaching litter of the king; iv. 1—6, the king addresses the Shulamite.)

Chapter iv. 7—v. 1: Beloved, Shulamite. (7—16, beloved; last words of 16, Shulamite: v. 1. beloved.)

Chapter v. 2—vi. 3: Shulamite, daughters of Jerusalem. (2—8, Shulamite narrates a dream; 9, daughters of Jerusalem; 10—16; Shulamite: vi. 1, daughters of Jerusalem; 2, 3, Shulamite.)

Chapter vi. 4—vii. 9: King, daughters of Jerusalem, Shulamite. 4—9, king, 10—13, give an account of the first encounter of the Shulamite with the royal cortège; vii. 1—9, king.)

Chapter vii. 10—viii. 14: Shulamite, daughters of Jerusalem, beloved. (10—viii. 4, Shulamite; 5a, a spectator witnessing approach of Shulamite and beloved; 5b—7, Shulamite to beloved; 8—12, Shulamite narrates an episode of her girlhood, with reflections; 13, beloved to Shulamite; 14, Shulamite in reply.)

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

1. *The Prophet Himself.*—To write anything like a biography of Isaiah is simply impossible. We have no materials for such a work. Like so many other of the great ones who, in the Old Testament story, worked so well for their Master, Isaiah, as regards himself, was usually studiously silent.

From notices scattered here and there in his writings we gather, however, the following particulars respecting himself. He was the son of Amoz. A Jewish tradition relates how this Amoz was a brother of King Amaziah. This is improbable, as such a relationship would make Isaiah too old. But that in some way Amoz was connected with Amaziah is not unlikely. It is clear that Isaiah belonged to an influential house, from the fact that from early days he was admitted to the friendship of, and evidently had great influence with, Kings Jotham and Hezekiah. It has been suggested by Dean Plumptre that Isaiah was a priest, as the vision which he saw (chap. vi. 1) was from the court which none might enter save the sons of Aaron. The explanation, however, of this scene is, that Isaiah saw and heard what is related in chapter vi. when in a trance.

His life was a long and busy one. He lived and worked under five kings—Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh—apparently under circumstances of great intimacy, roughly speaking from B.C. 779 to B.C. 690, some ninety years. The rabbinical tradition tells us how, under the last-named monarch, having refused to obey some of his idolatrous ordinances, the aged prophet was cruelly put to death: *placed, so runs the story, between two planks, Isaiah was killed by being sawn asunder.* The reference in Heb. xi. 37 is not improbably an allusion to the great prophet's fate. Compare Talmud, treatise Sanhedrin, ciii. 2. The Fathers Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Jerome, and Augustine accept this tradition as authentic.

It was a stormy and eventful period during which Isaiah

lived and preached and wrote. In his earlier years he dwelt in the midst of the comparative wealth and luxury enjoyed by Judah during the prosperous reign of Uzziah. He witnessed the sister kingdom of Israel first rendered tributary by the Assyrian monarch Pul, and subsequently conquered by the same people under Tiglath-Pileser. He watched the last struggles of Israel and the desperate resistance of Samaria, when the remnant of the ill-fated northern division of the chosen people were carried into captivity.

Isaiah, we know, with his own immediate circle, belonged to the higher and wealthier classes. He was on terms of intimacy with the high priest, and his usual residence was in the capital. As time went on, his influence increased, and in middle and later life he was undoubtedly the foremost man in the nation, exercising a peculiar power over the sovereign of the time and his advisers. His mighty and enduring influence was due, in the first instance, to his great natural abilities, to his earnestness and singleness of purpose, to his true patriotism and passionate desire to see his countrymen once more restored to the favour of the invisible King to whom the nation owed name, and laws, and political existence. But behind these things which any great and patriotic statesman might have possessed, Isaiah was indubitably regarded by king and people as possessing, in an eminent degree, those rare and supernatural powers which, ever and anon, belonged to the great religious heroes of Hebrew story, men like Samuel, Nathan, and Elijah. After David, Isaiah is possibly the most conspicuous personage in the history of Israel.

When Isaiah lived there was little left in Israel or Judah of real religious life. There was the formal, elaborate ritual of service and of sacrifice still maintained in the Temple, but it was generally hollow and meaningless, and the old friendship between the individual Israelite and the Eternal of Hosts comparatively unknown. In the northern kingdom of Israel, the cup of iniquity was filled, as we have seen, in Isaiah's time, and the prophet-statesman was a witness of the final invasion, the utter defeat of its armies, the storming of the capital city, Samaria, and the hopeless captivity of the people.

In the southern kingdom of Judah, it was Isaiah's life work to bring about a reformation, and to ward off a ruin similar to that which was witnessed in their kinsmen of the northern kingdom. The internal order of Judah, in the days when Isaiah wrote, has been graphically described as follows: * "Wealth

* See Professor Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, lecture vi., "The Reign of Ahaz."

had greatly accumulated in the later years of comparative prosperity, but its distribution had been such that it weakened rather than added strength to the nation. The rich nobles were steeped in gallantry, and feminine extravagance and vanity gave the tone to aristocratic society, which, like the *noblesse* of France on the eve of the great Revolution, was absorbed in gaiety and pleasure, while the masses were ground down by oppression, and the cry of their distress filled the land. All social bonds were loosed in the universal reign of injustice; every man was for himself, and no man for his brother. The subordination of classes was undermined. . . . The characteristic Hebrew obstinacy . . . was backed up by false religious confidence. The idols, of which the land was full, had not lost their reputation. Isaiah alone foresaw the approach of the hour of despair, when their vain deliverers should be confronted with stern realities."

During the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz his work and preaching outwardly seemed to have effected but little. But, no doubt round the loved prophet an ever-increasing circle of disciples, and listeners were preparing the way for the great reformation which took place in the reign of King Hezekiah. Under this monarch Isaiah's influence reached its highest point. At the court he was all-powerful; among all classes of the people his popularity was evidently very great. Nor was his advice and counsel by any means limited to the moral life of the nation and to things religious. He was, too, throughout the reign, the trusted adviser in foreign affairs and so could dictate the bold and patriotic policy which ended in the crushing defeat and consequent retreat of Sennacherib and the powerful Assyrian host. Of this particular period of Isaiah's life we have a detailed account, evidently from the pen of the prophet himself.

In the course of his story this true servant of the Lord lifts the veil which hangs between us and the unseen world around us, and gives us a graphic picture of the direct interposition of the Eternal of Hosts in favour of repentant Israel at the supreme moment of her awful danger.

During the remainder of Hezekiah's reign Judah enjoyed comparative peace and prosperity. It is in this period of rest, when the people, struggling to cleanse and purify the national life, were restored to the protection of the Glorious Arm, that Isaiah, released from the burden of sorrowful denunciation of national corruption, and rejoicing in the newly found national prosperity under the shadow of the Almighty Wings, saw and wrote down the exquisite and touching prophecies and promises which form the last great division of his works.

Tradition—apparently reliable—tells us how the old prophet

lived to see Manasseh succeed Hezekiah; lived to mourn over the utter declension of Judah, which set in during Manasseh's reign, and at last perished in his efforts to stem the tide of idolatry.

2. *The Work of Isaiah.*—The exact position Isaiah held in Jerusalem or at the court of the king of Judah is difficult for us to define. From either his relationship to the royal house, or from his position in Judah, he evidently was during the greater portion of his life on intimate relations with the court, and at times his influence appears to have been very great. He occupied with the people the peculiar position of a prophet or leader with whom the Eternal of Hosts held frequent communings. He was regarded with the same feelings of awe, mingled with fear or love, as in old days an Elijah or Elisha had been. To this favoured friend of the Eternal would the High and Holy One now and again, by vision in a prolonged trance, or by some mysterious communication of the Word of the Lord, disclose His will, and impart such knowledge of the near or even distant future as would assist his prophet in his high and difficult work.

Now what was this work? It was to bring to Judah—still loved of God—final offers of mercy; it was to tell them the sure doom which would follow if the present way of living was still followed in Judah and Jerusalem. It was to point out the utter worthlessness of the elaborate ceremonial law and the stately Temple ritual if *the life* of the nation remained selfish and loveless.

This arousing message, delivered in the morning of Isaiah's life, had but little success. The evil things went on in Judah as they did aforesome. The prophet was then charged with a stern message of doom. The reign of Hezekiah, and the reformation in the religion and life of the people, was the result. A new day seemed to be dawning for the chosen race. King and people united in a brave effort to reform the former life. Nor did the reward tarry, for the glorious Arm of the Lord was raised conspicuously in defence of Jerusalem and her king on the occasion of the great catastrophe which destroyed the army of Sennacherib.

The record of these stirring events was written by Isaiah himself, and the scribe who in after days collected and compiled his writings wove the well-loved record of the bright times when Hezekiah was king into the tapestry of his prophecy.

In those happy days after the great deliverance from Sennacherib, we think the word of the Lord came with new power on the prophet, perhaps somewhat after the fashion so beautifully

suggested by Dean Bradley* : "Isaiah was transported by God's Spirit into a time and region other than his own; . . . he is led in prolonged and solitary visions into a land that he has never trodden, and to a generation on whom he has never looked.

"The familiar scenes and faces among which he had lived and laboured have grown dim and disappeared. All sounds and voices of the present are hushed, and the interests and passions into which he has thrown himself, with all the intensity of his race and character, move him no more. The present has died out of the horizon of his soul's vision. . . . The voices in his ears are those of men unborn, and he lives a second life among events and persons, sins and sufferings, fears and hopes, photographed with the minutest accuracy on the sensitive and sympathetic medium of his own spirit; and he becomes the spokesman of the faith, and hope, and passionate yearning of the exiled nation, the descendants of men living when he wrote, in the profound peace of a renewed prosperity."

Very roughly, then, the writings of Isaiah may be divided into three great divisions—

The First. The book of warnings, denunciation, and woe.

The Second. The historical episode of the conversion of Israel under Hezekiah, and how the Lord awaked as one out of sleep and raised once more the Glorious Arm in defence of the people whom he loved.

The Third. The book of consolation, written during the happier days of Hezekiah—the outcome of what he saw in vision and trance concerning the coming Redeemer and the future of the Israel of God.

3. *The Authorship of Chapters xl.—lxvi.*—The authorship of the last great section of "Isaiah," chapters xl.—lxvi., in recent times has been frequently called in question. In Old Testament criticism these famous chapters occupy in some respects a somewhat similar position to St. John's Gospel in the New Testament, both suggesting searching inquiry, owing to the deep importance of both these writings in Christian theology.

The question is, Did Isaiah write these chapters? After

* The passage occurs in a University sermon, and was published in the *Undergraduates' Journal* (Oxford), Feb. 18, 1875, and is quoted by Professor Cheyne in these words ("Isaiah," vol. ii., essay 6): "No one, perhaps, has better expressed this view than the present Dean of Westminster, who does not, however, venture to decide upon its merits." The view in question was that Isaiah xl.—lxvi. was a monograph written by Isaiah in a quasi-ecstatic state, not necessarily at one time. St. John not improbably refers to some such quasi-ecstatic condition when he writes, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice," &c., &c. (Rev. i. 10).

weighing the various arguments it seems indisputably clear that he and no other was the writer.

The following is a summary of the main points of the evidence which leads us to this conclusion.

(i.) *The Clear Testimony of History.*—It may be asserted with all confidence that for eighteen centuries no Jewish tradition existed which even suggested a different author of this latter part of the “Isaiah” prophecy; on the contrary, all ancient authority from the earliest times contradicts any suspicion of the authorship of chapters xl.—lxvi. So the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament scriptures, put out b.c. 285—150, ascribes the *entire* contents of the book to Isaiah, son of Amoz. While in the book of Psalms—then as now popularly ascribed to David—the LXX. translators are careful in their headings to particular psalms, to give the name of the traditional composer of the special psalm—such as Moses, Asaph, Ethan, “the chief musician,” and others.

Jesus the son of Sirach, the author of the book “Ecclesiasticus,” distinctly ascribes to the Isaiah “who lived in the days of Hezekiah” the authorship of chapters xl.—lxvi. of the great prophecy. This son of Sirach was famous in his days for great learning and wisdom. He lived and wrote his important work *circ. b.c. 150.*

About 170 b.c. the Haftarahs, or prophetic lessons read in the synagogue on Sabbath days, festivals, and fasts, were authoritatively arranged by the Jews. Sixteen of these lessons are taken from Isaiah; of these thirteen are taken from these disputed chapters.

Josephus, the well-known Jewish historian, very early in the Christian era gives it as a received tradition among his countrymen that Cyrus published his decree for the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra i. 2) after he had been shown Isaiah’s prophecies about himself (Isaiah xliv. 28 and following).

Among the early Christians no doubt as to the authorship of these chapters existed. The New Testament writers constantly quote them as Isaiah’s. The first suggestion that the writings contained in chapters xl.—lxvi. were not the work of Isaiah came from the Jewish writer Aben Ezra, who wrote in the twelfth century of our era—nearly two thousand years after the first appearance of the great prophecies. During those two thousand years these writings had been read and studied and pondered over by Jew and Gentile, by friend and foe, with varied feelings, but with the deepest interest and closest attention. But no idea of another than Isaiah having been their author seems ever to have occurred to either friend or foe.

From Aben Ezra's time until the close of the eighteenth century—five to six hundred years more—nothing fresh was suggested respecting the authorship of these later chapters of Isaiah. Since the close of the last century the last part of Isaiah has occupied the place, in some respects—with scholars and critics of different schools of thought—in the Old Testament, which the Gospel of St. John fills in the New.

There is no doubt but that in both these cases it is the very clear and definite witness to the Person and office of Jesus Christ which these writings afford, which has brought upon them this searching and often hostile investigation.

It has been well said that “the fact that such a character as Jesus Christ, so unique, so divine, should have come into the world, leads us to feel that there must surely have been in earlier times some shadows at least, or images, to represent, dimly it may be, to former generations that great thing which they were not actually to witness. It would lead us to believe that there must have been some prophetic voice to announce the future coming of the Lord, or else the very stones would have cried out.”* Such a reasonable expectation is fulfilled in many a passage whispered at different times by the Holy Spirit into the ears of prophet and psalmist, and woven by them—bright golden threads—into the tapestry of their writings. Nowhere, however, in any of the Old Testament writings do we find such distinct pictures of Jesus Christ, the suffering Messiah, as in the so-called second part of Isaiah—such clear foreshadowings of special circumstances in the life of our Lord. The earlier chapters of the same prophet are not without these foreshadowings; for instance, in the seventh chapter we have the strange and, until the Incarnation, the inexplicable picture of the Virgin who was to conceive and to bear a Son whose name was to be “Immanuel” (God with us); and in the ninth chapter we read of the Child who was to be born and given to us, and the Child's name was to be “Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” The meaning of the marvellous picture of the Divine Child—who was to be called “the Mighty God”—was an unsolved mystery till the birth of the Child Jesus.

But the portraits of the teaching, suffering, and in His suffering triumphant, Messiah, notably in chapters xlvi. 1—7, xlii. 1—6, l. 4—9, lii. 13—15, liii., stand out alone in vividness, exactness, and clearness among the many Old Testament foreshadowings of the coming Deliverer.

* Dean Stanley, quoted by Professor Cheyne, “Isaiah,” vol. ii. p. 194.

No one, save he whose heart is hopelessly hardened and whose eyes are eternally blinded, can read these words, written seven hundred years before the Passion tragedy, without being conscious of something of the impression that this solemn, awful prophecy produced upon the Earl of Rochester, of whom Bishop Burnet writes: "As Lord Rochester heard it read, he felt an inward force upon him which did so enlighten his mind and conviction that he could resist it no longer, for the words had an authority which did shoot like rays or beams in his mind, so that he was convinced, not only by the reasonings he had about it which satisfied his understanding, but by a power which did so effectually constrain him, that he did ever after as firmly believe in the Saviour as if he had seen him in the clouds."*

But the famous second part of Isaiah does not merely contain these vivid pictures of that strange sweet life which, seven hundred years later, was to be lived in Israel and Judah. It contains plain and unmistakable statements respecting the great doctrine—the keystone of Christian theology—vicarious atonement. In the famous passage, chapter lii. 13—15, and chapter liii., it is plainly taught in language none can mistake. The servant of the Lord successfully makes intercession for the many sinners, and by the sacrifice of Himself atones for their sins. It is true that this is the master-thought which runs through the whole of the Law of Moses, but it was left to Isaiah (in the so-called second part of the book of his prophecy) to explain how this great atonement was to be made and who was the Person to make it.

It was necessary that this all-important explanation should be made in order to explain the latter part of that wonderful Psalm xxii., which, next to these chapters of Isaiah, contains the clearest anticipation of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament; for there is a gap between the former and the latter part of this psalm, which can only be filled up by assuming the vicarious atonement given by Isaiah lii. 13—15, liii. "The writer of the psalm foresaw, as it were in a vision, the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, but it was not revealed to the Psalmist how these sufferings produced so immense a result."† Isaiah, in certain of the later chapters of his prophecy, fills up this gap, and completes the prophetic story of the future great Redemption, not of Israel, but of all the world.

(ii.) *The Arguments upon which Critics, since the end of the Eighteenth Century, have based the Assumption that Chapters xl.—lxvi. were the work of other hands than Isaiah's.—These chap-*

* Quoted by Professor Cheyne, "Isaiah," vol. ii. p. 208.

† See Professor Cheyne, "Isaiah," vol. ii., essay 111 (4).

ters would have been written with greater probability by a Jew living at the time of the return from Babylon. The name and history of Cyrus (chapters xliv., xlv.) would have been known to such a writer, whereas, if these prophecies were Isaiah's, a special revelation of the name and work of the great Persian monarch must have been made to the prophet in a trance or otherwise. But such an argument here can have little weight. The whole of the great prophecy known as Isaiah's is undoubtedly studded with such special revelations : for instance, prediction of the fall of Babylon, of the most definite kind in chapter xiii., xiv., xxi. Again, granted that chapters xl.—lxvi. were the work of a Jew or Jews contemporary with the return from Babylon, what but a special revelation had enabled the writer or writers to have written this marvellous detailed story of the passion of Jesus Christ, more than five centuries before this strange, awful drama was acted under the shadow of Herod's temple in the Jerusalem of Pontius Pilate?

If the modern critic gets rid of the difficulty which the prediction of the doom of Babylon, or the restoration by the Persian Cyrus, confronts him with, he is met with the far more important question : Who told the writer the Passion story ?

(iii.) *The Local Colouring of the Late Chapters.*—Absolutely nothing can be made of this argument. These notices of scenery can be pressed with equal force by the critics, or by those scholars who prefer to walk along the old paths of Jewish and Gentile tradition.

(iv.) *The Question of Style.*—Considerable stress has been laid by the school of modern critics on the change of the style of the different divisions of the book. They suggest that the Book of Isaiah, in the form we possess it, was the work of four or five, or even more hands (Ewald suggests seven). Now it is clear that the prophet-statesman lived to a great age, and that a very large portion of his long life was passed in activity, now as a preacher of righteousness, now as a prophet or seer in the highest sense of the word, now as a statesman. The book, as we have it, represents his work in all these different epochs of his long and varied career, a public career which was contemporary with the reigns of five kings—Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh—a period of between sixty and seventy years.

The slight differences in the style and diction of this book—for after all the differences are but slight—are exactly what would be expected from a writer writing during a period extending over so many years and addressed to such varied audiences. It is, in fact, what we find in authors of our own age. Then too, the style of a writing devoted to passionate exhortation or

burning rebuke would be considerably altered from the style of a composition devoted to a mysterious prophecy of things to happen in some dim and far-remote future, or made up of words of blessed comfort and serene hope. And it is of these different compositions that the Book of Isaiah is made up. The so-called earlier chapters are mainly made up of passionate exhortation and burning rebuke. The smaller central portion is purely historical, and consists of the archives of a portion of King Hezekiah's noble and eventful reign, picturesquely and graphically written. The latter chapters are for the most part prophecies of a far future, lit up with joyous expectancy, or are words of the sweetest comfort written in language of the sublimest poetry. Surely all these compositions, spread over sixty or seventy years, could not be written in one style; the most skilful forger the world has ever seen could scarcely have accomplished such a task.

Indeed, the differences of style are what a fair critic would naturally expect. On the other hand, in all the various sections of Isaiah we find the same thoughts running through the writings, the same imagery adopted, the same words used, the same metaphors employed. For instance, the loved title of God, "the Holy One of Israel," which we only find in five places in all the other books of the Old Testament, in the earliest chapters of Isaiah we come upon it eleven times, and in the later chapters thirteen times. As an instance of the same peculiar imagery being adopted, the images of light and darkness, used in a spiritual sense, are comparatively rare in the Old Testament; in the Book of Isaiah they are very frequent, light being used some eighteen times, and darkness sixteen, and the imagery occurs indifferently in the various sections of the prophecy.*

Indeed the advocates of a plurality of authors in Isaiah are compelled to allow that the "great unknown" (the appellation given by Ewald to the writer to whom he attributes the largest share in the authority of the so-called disputed chapters), and the other presumed writers of large portions of the book, must have been deeply steeped in the phraseology and thoughts of the older Isaiah to have been able so closely to imitate the famous and popular prophet.

Dean Plumptre has well observed here "that the history of all literature shows that a writer may, from various motives, so imbue his mind with the thoughts and language of another, that it will not be easy even for an expert to distinguish between the

* Canon Rawlinson, in his comments on Isaiah, discusses the points raised here at great length (see "Pulpit Commentary," "Isaiah," pp. xxii.—xxvii.), and gives very many similar examples.

counterfeit and the original. All that can be said as to the application of this inductive method to the disputed portions of Isaiah is that the parallelisms and peculiarities may fairly be left to balance each other.”* In this portion of the field the contest will and must ever be a drawn one; the disputants on both sides will claim the victory. The real battle-field must be chosen elsewhere. The advocates for the unity of authority of the book bearing the honoured name of Isaiah may, however, rest their arguments with real security upon the historical proofs already adduced; may ask their adversaries, with some confidence that no satisfactory reply will be given, how it comes to pass that while Jewish tradition faithfully hands down the varied authorship of many of the Psalms, attributed as a whole to David, no hint is given as to a varied authorship of the different sections of Isaiah; but from two hundred and fifty years before Christ† until our own day, with the exception of one solitary scholar in the twelfth century (Aben Ezra), we know that Jews as well as Christians have held and taught, without doubt and without question, that the book of the Old Testament known as Isaiah was written during the lifetime and by the hand of the great prophet-statesman.

4. *Characteristic Features of the “Messiah of Isaiah.”*—The Book of Isaiah occupies its unique position in the hearts of all sorts and conditions of men, in the hearts of the many unlearned, as well as of the few learned, owing to its frequent mention of and reference to Messiah, not only the Restorer of the tribes of Israel, but the Light of the Gentiles also. It is not its many and deeply interesting historical allusions, not its curious and plainly fulfilled prophecies, not its words of tenderest comfort, not its sublime and soul-stirring poetry, which has won for it its solitary pre-eminence among the prophetic books, perhaps among all the writings of the Old Testament; it is its testimony to Messiah, to which men’s hearts turn, some with unfriendly critical inquiry, some with grateful adoration. It is its strange and marvellous witness to the coming Redeemer which constitutes its chief title to honour.

(i.) Among its characteristic Messianic features is the extraordinary resemblance of the person painted and of the life described to the person and life of Jesus Christ, who did not appear on the visible stage of the earth for some seven hundred years after the writing and teaching of Isaiah. Among other

* The Dean of Wells (Dr. E. H. Plumptre), “Isaiah,” in Bishop Elliott’s Commentary on the Old Testament, Introduction, p. 414.

† And the LXX scholars of course simply repeated the teaching they had received from a yet earlier generation.

famous passages which exemplify this, the following are especially notable—Isaiah vii. 14, &c. ; the strange and supernatural manner of Messiah's birth—Isaiah ix. 12 ; the Galilean ministry of Messiah ; and chiefest of all, Isaiah lii. 13—15, liii. ; the manner in which the work of Messiah was accomplished. Many other sections and passages might be quoted to exemplify this last characteristic feature, notably Isaiah lxi. 1—3.

(ii.) The Messiah or servant of Jehovah in His work of governing and redeeming the world is Himself Divine. This runs through various parts of the prophecy. Especially, however, should be noted Isaiah ix. 6, where the prophet states how the “Child Messiah” was to be styled “The Mighty God,” the same lofty and awful title given in the next chapter (x. 21) to Jehovah. Thus in the prized volume of the most revered prophet of the monotheistic Jew is the coming Messiah termed “The Mighty God” !

(iii.) While presenting a picture of a Messiah glorious and triumphant (see such passages as Isaiah lxiii. 1—6), this book paints in plain, unmistakable colours the sad true figure of this Messiah winning His glory and triumph through an awful suffering (as in Isaiah lii. 13—15, liii.). The striking and ample references in Isaiah to a suffering and, through His suffering, triumphant Messiah, supplement and illustrate with a startling clearness older and more obscure references to the same awful suffering to be endured by the coming Divine Deliverer in the Psalms and older prophets. It was no doubt mainly owing to these references, especially to the Isaiah passages, as well as to oral traditions, that the great Jewish teachers, before and after the Christian era, whose teaching is embodied and crystallised in their loved Talmud, owed their doctrine of a suffering Messiah. This doctrine of the Talmudists is well illustrated by the following beautiful apologue taken from the Talmud: “Rabbi Joshua Ben Levi found Elijah, who, in Jewish tradition, was to be the pioneer of the Messiah, standing at the gate of Paradise. Rabbi Joshua asked Elijah, ‘When cometh the Messiah?’ Elijah replied, ‘At the Lord's good pleasure.’ Again Rabbi Joshua asked, ‘When cometh the Messiah?’ Elijah answered, ‘Go thyself and ask him.’ Rabbi Joshua went on, ‘Then where dwelleth he?’ Elijah told him, ‘Messiah was at the gate of the city (Rome), and was sitting among the poor and sick, and there was tenderly dressing one wound after the other.’”—Talmud, Treatise Sanhedrim, 98a.*

* Quoted by Professor Cheyne, “Isaiah,” essay ii. 219, from Wunsche—“Leider des Messias.” Leipzig: 1870. See Dr. Westcott, “Introduction to the Study of the Gospels,” chap. xi.

(iv.) The doctrine of the vicarious atonement (in the sense Christians understand it) is plainly taught by Isaiah. A suffering Messiah was no new idea in Hebrew theology; and the thought of the vicarious atonement which this Divine sufferer was to accomplish, had appeared in even the earlier Books of the Old Testament. Effectual intercession of the righteous for the sinful is a thought running through the entire Old Testament (cf. such passages as Genesis xviii. 23 ff, Exodus xxxii. 32 ff, Psalm cvi. 23, and Amos vii. 1 ff*): and though we know there is a height which guilt may reach at which God will no longer accept the intercession of his servants (Jeremiah xv. 1, xi. 14 ff), the way is prepared for the revelation of One greater than any of the created sons of men; of One not only perfectly righteous Himself, but able by uniting them mystically to Himself to make the many righteous; of One whose sacrifice of Himself was so precious that it could be accepted even for a people which had deliberately broken its covenant with Jehovah, and which was therefore legally liable to the punishment of extirpation.

The thought too was perpetually before the eyes of the children of Israel in their simple sacrifices, from the days of Adam to Moses, and after the time of Moses in the elaborate ritual of the Tabernacle and the Temple. But the thought was embodied by Isaiah in language new and possibly for the hearers, strange and startling.

5. *The Character of Isaiah the Prophet.*—Although we are not in possession of materials which would enable the writer to put together a life of Isaiah, yet from the sixty-six chapters which we possess of his, we can form a fairly accurate knowledge of the character of the greatest of the Hebrew prophets, the one who—of all that strong, mighty band who occupy a unique position in the world's story—has most powerfully influenced not merely the generations among whom he lived and worked, but their descendants for some 2,600 eventful years.

The most conspicuous feature of this true hero, and the one which must most weightily influence those souls who, more or less closely, have communed with the book of his prophecy, is his reverence for, his awful fear of, the Lord. It seems as though the vision which he saw when on the threshold of active life was ever present with him, as though he ever looked on the Lord high and lifted up, the seraphim, or burning ones, standing by the awful Presence, keeping solemn watch and ward.

6. *Isaiah in a Vision had looked on God.*—As a preacher and teacher he delivered his message, often a hard stern message, fearlessly.

* Oehlen, O. T. Theol. ii. 425 (trans.).

To him, whether he addressed the king or the lowest subject, it was the same thing. He would say to the monarch: "Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but must ye weary my God also?" In the most scathing terms he denounces the nobles and chief men of the country for their pride and injustice, for their sensuality, for their heartless oppression of the poor and helpless. Isaiah, in his great and sublime task, cared for no man—prince, or noble, or high official.

Not that he was in any sense a demagogue, thirsting for popular applause. In the plainest, severest language he reproached the people for their want of true religion, for their love of evil. "The faithful city" (Jerusalem), he tells them, "has become a harlot." "The people are laden with iniquity; they are a seed of evil-doers." "The nation is a sinful nation." The people draw near God, with their mouth and with their lips they honour Him, but they have removed their hearts far from Him. Yet in spite of this severity, this hot indignation against sin, we find him ever full of the tenderest sympathy towards sinners.

Although a true Jew and a devoted patriot, his heart is large enough to rejoice at the grand vista which he beheld in his visions of the future admission of the isles of the Gentiles into the glorious kingdom of his God.

As a writer Isaiah was a humorist and satirist in the truest sense of the word. This is evident from his vivid, quaint description of the strange manufacture of idols and images of worship, from his curious and vivid picture of female luxury and fashion in his day and time.

For some sixty years this noble and heroic man, who after David fills the foremost place in the story of the chosen people, discharged the varied offices of prophet and seer, writer and statesman, in a most critical and eventful period of his nation's history. To his devoted loyalty to the God who loved Israel, to his unswerving faith, to his splendid patriotism, was owing the great moral revolution which was rewarded by the golden reign of the great Hezekiah, and the strange spectacle of the comparatively little kingdom of Judah successfully defying the mighty power of the greatest nation of the Eastern world. And although Isaiah survived the good and great Hezekiah, and lived long enough to witness the relapse of the court and people into their old sin and degradation, his writings and his work lived on long after Jerusalem was a byword and her Temple a ruin. Though, to human eyes, Isaiah and his work seemed a failure, and his words as though only traced in the sand, the words and the work, the one dictated and the other inspired

by the Eternal of Hosts, men now see possess a deathless power which increases as the centuries roll on in their solemn course. The words have been—nay, still are—in part, at least, the basis of the theology of Christendom. On them the pious Jew still loves to linger, because they represent to him the noblest, truest aspirations of his race. In them, century after century, devout Christians in every nation under heaven find written in the sublimest yet in the simplest language those sweet and blessed promises which, in all the stress and fever of life's trials, nerve men and women to suffer and be strong, and which again and again whisper to them of the coming times when sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Like so many of earth's great ones, the prophet-statesman—so runs the sad tradition—passed through pain and agony to his rest. Now in the bosom of God he sees the fruit of his long and noble though, as far as earth was concerned, ill-requited toils—sees the souls of unnumbered harassed ones finding in his story of Messiah new and ever new bulwarks for the faith which must save them; reading in his sweet and comfortable promises great and fresh assurances of the perfect peace which passeth understanding. May we not say of Isaiah as of Isaiah's master, "He sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied"?

7. *Of the Compilation of Isaiah in its present Form.*—It is clear that the Book of Isaiah as we possess it—even though it be assumed (as it is in this little study) that it is all the work of one hand, and that the hand of the great prophet—never left the prophet in its present evidently abbreviated, and (looked at as a whole) disconnected state.

Now roughly the Book of Isaiah may be divided into three main parts.

Part i. is largely made up of sections containing burning exhortations to repentance and of scathing denunciations, and consists of thirty-five chapters. These sections are some of them very brief, evidently but extracts from a much longer original. This first part is capable of division into many sections, each of which is perfectly complete in itself, and hardly, if at all, connected with what precedes or succeeds it.

Part ii., chapters xxxvi.—xxxix. is purely an historical memoir of a remarkable episode in the history of Judah, an episode with which Isaiah was closely connected. It is a piece quite complete in itself, and has no real connection with anything that goes before or that follows after.

Part iii. consists of twenty-seven chapters, xl.—lxvi., and may be described as "the Book of Consolations." It is not so entirely disconnected as Part i., still it is broken up into

many different sections. It cannot be looked upon as originally one book.

The whole of the great work has evidently passed through the hands of a compiler, who has chosen for his purpose only certain extracts from the writings of the great author. Yet this collection or compilation is of most ancient date. Isaiah, as we now have it in our English Bible, was read and studied in the synagogues and schools in the time of our Lord, nearly nineteen centuries ago. In more remote times we still find "Isaiah" in its present condition. The Septuagint translation was made about 250 B.C. from the same Hebrew "Isaiah" which we now possess. The revision or compilation must then have been made at some epoch between 750 B.C. and 250 B.C.

The question then presents itself: How, and when, and by whom was this work of collecting and selecting, and possibly of recasting the Prophet's writings, carried out? We possess no details here, no tradition of names remains to us. After the return from the Captivity, when the chosen people were once more settled in their ruined city and loved land, but under sadly changed conditions: shorn of their old power and wealth, reduced in numbers and in influence, scarcely owning a name even among vassal races, in these times of regret and almost hopeless mourning the people cared for the memory of the great heroes who had been friends of God in a way their ancestors had never cared for the living men themselves. It was to satisfy their national cravings to learn more of a past life irrevocably lost, of a life illumined by the nearer presence of a God the memory of whose very NAME was lost, that there arose among the "returned from exile" a great and peculiar literary class—the scribes or Sopherim—whose function was collecting and editing, and probably subsequently expounding, the scattered records of prophetic revelation. Much of the Old Testament as we now possess it was the work of these earnest and devoted men. But though these Sopherim or scribes may, probably did, put the larger part of our Old Testament into its present shape, its devout reader need never think that the old loved words are not the words of Moses or Samuel, or the expressions of David or Isaiah. It is hard to believe that a scribe ever altered a word or changed an expression; he abbreviated and made selections—that was all.

When we call to mind the deep spirit of intense reverence for every letter of their ancient records which, with all their faults, certainly characterised the Jewish nation after the return from the Captivity, when we remember the strange and peculiar respect for every jot and tittle of the sacred memoirs of their

dead heroes which we know was the great feature of the Jews in those sad times of cherished memories and unavailing regrets, it is surely in the highest degree improbable that any additions were made to the records which they possessed. The work of the Sopherim was no doubt limited to a careful selection of what they deemed important and interesting for the people, to what especially bore upon the lost national glories of Israel and their former intimate friendship with the Eternal of Hosts, and, above all, to what threw light upon the dim and distant vision of the coming Deliverer, the one hope which lent colour to this grey and monotonous period.

The work of the Sopherim may be summed up in the word "abbreviation," or better, "selection from" materials preserved in the schools of the prophets or in the royal and priestly archives. There is no reason to suppose that any of these precious writings were lost in the days of their captivity. Such a probable theory of the work of the Sopherim on the books of the Old Testament, after the return from exile, will explain many a difficulty in the various books, as, for instance, repetition, apparent contradiction, want of continuity, seeming error; when it is remembered that constantly the important passage or the interesting statement has been without explanation taken from the context; when it is borne in mind how not unfrequently the same story as told by two or more narrators, viewing the events naturally from entirely different standpoints, has been selected, from its deep importance or its special interest, for a double mention (like the story of Creation in Genesis), in the scribes' great compilation men call the Old Testament.

To sum up, these scribe compilers of Isaiah had before them probably a considerable mass of memoirs, prophecies, sermons, written memoranda of rapt communings with his God-friend, left by Isaiah, the fruit of a life of sixty noble years of toil, and out of all this mass of material, the Sopherim had to select what in their judgment would best help to raise the life of the poor remnant of fallen Israel which had returned to their country. This explains the varied nature of the book, its abruptness, its strange want of continuity; the abruptness, for instance, of the two earliest Messianic prophecies in chapters vii. and ix. These passages were no doubt taken from their original context, a context which probably contained no useful lesson for future days, while the marvellous and startling prophecies by themselves were judged worthy of a place in the book, though the compilers possibly never guessed their deep, real import. Applying this rule generally, many of the difficulties of exposition vanish.

According to their judgment was the selection made. Yes, but was not that judgment helped, informed, prompted, by the unearthly higher wisdom? May we not surely teach that these nameless Sopherim too were, in the highest sense, inspired in their selection of passages. To their loved work they devoted their lives, regardless of personal distinction. To these self-forgetting ones Professor Cheyne, though in a different context, nobly applies the words of an American prose-poet: "They chose the better, and loftier, and more unselfish part, laying their individual hopes, their fame, their prospects of enduring remembrance, at the feet of those great departed ones whom they so loved and venerated."*

8. *On the Sopherim (Scribes), to whose Labour "The Book of Isaiah" in its Present Form is owing.*—Roughly speaking, we may assume that Ezra, the Priestly Scribe, on the return from the Captivity about B.C. 450—440, laid the foundation of the new Judaism. The destruction of the Temple and city, the long Captivity, had slain the spirit of idolatry, which had, from the days of Moses, poisoned the Hebrew life, and the marvellous reaction which has endured for nearly 2,400 years among the Chosen People set in.† The law of Moses was restored with terrible sternness—synagogues were established, the Sopherim were constituted, and, under the guidance of Ezra, the sacred books which form the Old Testament canon probably were finally cast into their present shape; then, by degrees, thanks to their labours and that of their successors, that marvellous compilation known as the Talmud grew round the sacred books; first probably in the form of oral traditional "decisions" respecting the full bearing and signification of the precepts of the Mosaic law generally termed *Halakha*, later known, when committed to writing, as the *Mishna*; secondly, but considerably later, in the form of oral explanations and comments and legends founded upon the Decisions (*Halakha*). These are generally termed *Haggada*, and later known, when committed to writing, as the *Gemara*; the *Mishna* and *Gemara* were subsequently known as the *Talmud*.

* Hawthorne's "Transformation," chapter vi. The writer of this sketch here takes the opportunity of gratefully acknowledging his thanks to Professor Cheyne, of whose learning and research, though not always of the conclusions drawn, the writer has freely availed himself.

† The Talmud account of this is as follows: "Ezra established a Fast Day, on which he and the Levites prayed to God with loud cries to banish idolatry from the people. A billet fell from Heaven, on which was written the word 'granted.' After three days and nights the spirit of idolatry was delivered to them like a flaming lion, which bounded out of the Holy of Holies. By the advice of the prophet Zechariah, they seized it and flung it into a leaden coffin hermetically sealed."—Treatise "Yoma," f. 67; Treatise "Sauhedrin," fol. 14, col. 1.

To these early, at first, oral teachings which began with Ezra and his companions, and which subsequently expanded into the Mishna and Gemara, we must add the Masorah, which was also the work of the schools of scholars founded by Ezra, and which became, as the Rabbis termed it, "a fence to the Scriptures." The Masorah busied itself only with the text of the old Hebrew Scriptures, and took careful account of every letter and every verse of the sacred writings; as it now exists in writing, its date is uncertain; in its original oral form it doubtless began its work not long after the days of Ezra.

Ezra founded and organized the first great school for the collection, putting in order, and editing, and subsequently commenting upon the Holy Scripture, including the law, the prophets, and the sacred poetry such as the Psalms and other books deemed holy, which have, since his days, now about 2,400 years ago, formed the canon of Old Testament Scripture. This school or college of Ezra's is known in Jewish story as "The Men of the Great Synagogue," and these we may regard as the fathers of Rabbinism. According to Maimonides, the great Jewish scholar and writer, these were 120 in number and commenced with Haggai * the Prophet, who is referred to frequently in the Talmud as the expounder of the Oral Law.† These "Men of the Great Synagogue" of Ezra were, according to ancient Jewish tradition, in direct succession from Moses.

Moses received the law on Mount Sinai and gave it to Joshua, Joshua committed it to the Elders, the Elders committed it to the Prophets (*i.e.* schools of the Prophets), and the Prophets committed it to the "Men of the Great Synagogue" ‡ of Ezra after the Captivity.

It was these earnest and devoted men, of whom personally, with the exception of Ezra and Haggai, we know so little, who, we believe, sorted, arranged, and selected the papers and memoranda of Isaiah, and among other labours connected with the Book of the Old Testament canon, gave us the Book of Isaiah the prophet in the form we now possess it.

* Talmud, Treatise Yevamoth, f. 16, p. 2.

† Pirke Avoth, i., Avoth of Rabbi Nathan, i.

‡ The School of the Great Synagogue lasted with the Sopherim 138 years. It was in this period, we believe, that the canon was definitely settled. Maimonides reckons rather a longer period for the work of the "Men of the Great Synagogue" from Haggai, B.C. 520, to Simon the Just, B.C. 300.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.

1. *The Times of the Prophet.*—Different to Isaiah, and it may be said, to the rest of the “goodly fellowship of the prophets,” we possess full information as to the life and work of Jeremiah. Indeed, the book of his prophecy is so closely interwoven with the events of his stormy life, that to grasp the meaning of the prophecies, we must have the life-story unrolled before us.

To understand the meaning of the story, some knowledge of the history of that sad age is especially needful. It was not long before Jeremiah was born that the life and work of the great Isaiah came to an end; the apostasy and subsequent repentance of Manasseh, in whose reign Isaiah was murdered, must have been still fresh in the memory of men in the early years of Jeremiah.

King Esarhaddon of Nineveh avenged the great disaster of Sennacherib, his father, before Jerusalem in the days of Isaiah when Hezekiah reigned, by taking the holy city and by leading captive her king, Hezekiah’s son Manasseh, to Babylon. Manasseh was subsequently released, and consented as a vassal king to Nineveh to hold Judah. Assurbanipal, most probably the “great and noble Asnapper” of Ezra, succeeded Esarhaddon, his father, *circa* B.C. 666. The Ninevite king resided principally in Babylon, which was already showing signs of dissatisfaction with the Ninevite rule. He was evidently a strong sovereign, and completely broke the Egyptian power by dividing Egypt into twelve petty kingdoms. During his reign Judah remained a tributary to Nineveh.

In the seventeenth year though of the reign of this Assurbanipal, king of Nineveh, Psametichus restored the broken unity of Egypt, and once more united the whole land. Egypt now,

for a season, disputed the sovereignty of the Eastern world with Nineveh. When this restoration of Egypt to the position of a great power took place, Manasseh was in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, and from this time gradually grew up that strong inclination in Judah to court the friendship of Egypt, which eventually proved its ruin. Politically, the great work of Jeremiah's life was to combat this fatal policy. Manasseh was succeeded by Amon, and Amon by the good king Josiah. During Josiah's reign Jeremiah exercised great influence. This prince lost his life fighting against Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo. Four years after its victory at Megiddo, the Egyptian power was totally destroyed at Carchemish by a new power which had lately risen on the ruins of the old Ninevite dominion.

The power of Nineveh probably had been for some time declining, partly owing to a great invasion of Scythians, partly to the discontent of Babylon, a discontent which ended in Babylon asserting its independence. The Eastern world, two years after the battle of Megiddo, in which Josiah lost his life, was astonished at learning that Nineveh, so long the Queen City of the East, had fallen before the armies of Cyaxares the Mede and Nabopolassar, king of the recently freed Babylon. The ruin of Nineveh was complete. Two years later the son of Nabopolassar, the famous Nebuchadnezzar broke the Egyptian power at Carchemish.

The great Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar was temporarily stayed in his career of conquest by his father's death, and the need of his presence at Babylon in order to consolidate his power. Egypt and her vassal states became now subject to Babylon. Amongst these latter was Judah and her king, Jehoiakim, who succeeded Josiah.

After three years Jehoiakim rebelled against the authority of Babylon; Nebuchadnezzar in person took the field against his rebellious vassal. Jerusalem was invested and soon fell. Her king was put to death, and a few months later Jehoiachin—who succeeded his father in the sad sovereignty—was, with the flower of the people, carried away captive to Babylon. A poor remnant was left in Judah, and Zedekiah reigned as their king. Again Egypt became their snare. Something like a revival of the Egyptian power had taken place under Pharaoh Hophra; the miserable remnant of Jews left under King Zedekiah in Judah, turning against their mighty Babylonian master, sought to strengthen themselves by an alliance with Egypt, against the advice of Jeremiah, who had remained with Zedekiah in Judah. The Chaldean vengeance did not tarry long; again was Jerusalem besieged, again captured. Then the Temple was burnt, the king

was blinded, the best of the poor remnant of the people left by Nebuchadnezzar were carried into Babylonia. Gedaliah, a friend of Jeremiah, was appointed governor of the now desolate and almost deserted land.

Gedaliah was shortly after murdered by some self-styled patriot Jews, who, after their deed of blood, fled, carrying Jeremiah, an unwilling captive, with them to the city of Tahpanhes, in Egypt. Here we lose sight of the aged and desolate prophet. A tradition, well supported, relates how his angry countrymen, infuriated at the mournful reproaches and earnest remonstrances of Jeremiah, stoned the dreaded and hated prophet some time after the arrival of the fugitives at Tahpanhes.

The following tables of dates and principal historical events which happened in the life of Jeremiah will be useful to the reader, but it must be borne in mind that though roughly the general chronological arrangement is fairly reliable, any *exact* chronological arrangement of this period is precarious and certainly open to criticism. The first table is generally taken from Professor H. Brandes' "The Royal Succession of Judah and Israel, according to the Biblical Narrative and the Cuneiform Inscriptions," quoted by Professor Cheyne, "Jeremiah" in the "Pulpit Commentary."

MANASSEH, in whose reign Isaiah was, according to tradition, put to death.

AMON.

B.C.

- 641 First year of Josiah. In the thirteenth year of Josiah, the "Word of the Lord" came to Jeremiah. The ministry of Jeremiah especially belongs to the last eighteen years of Josiah's reign.
- 611 Thirty-first year of Josiah.
- 610 Jehoahaz.
- 609 First year of Jehoiakim.
- 599 Eleventh year of Jehoiachin.
- 598-7 Jehoiachin. Beginning of the Captivity.
- 597 Zedekiah appointed king.
- 596 First year of Zedekiah.
- 586 Eleventh year of Zedekiah. Fall of the kingdom of Judah.

After the Fall of Judah as a Kingdom.

Gedaliah is left in Judah as governor of the remnant of the people allowed to remain in the land.

Jeremiah remains with him.

Gedaliah is murdered, and Jeremiah is carried away by the Jews who murdered Gedaliah into Egypt.

At Tahpanes, in Egypt, probably not long after, the Jewish fugitives murdered Jeremiah.

Foreign Political Events which materially affected the History of Judah and Jerusalem during the Last Period of its History.

Assurbanipal had succeeded his father Esarhaddon, the son and successor of Sennacherib, as king of Assyria. He divided Egypt into twelve separate states, and rendered it for a time powerless, until Psammetichus, in the seventeenth year of Assurbanipal, again united the whole country. It was this sudden growth of great power in Egypt which caused statesmen in Judah to turn their thoughts towards winning Egypt as a friend and protector against the great Eastern power on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris.

Acting though under the advice of Jeremiah, Josiah encountered Pharaoh Necho at Megiddo, and was defeated and slain. Some two years after the battle of Megiddo, Nineveh fell before the armies of Cyaxares and Nabopolassar. Babylon now takes the place of Nineveh, and for a time held almost undisputed sovereignty over the East.

The power of Egypt had been previously broken by the defeat of Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish by Nebuchadnezzar the son, and subsequently the successor, of Nabopolassar at Babylon.

2. *The Mission of Jeremiah.*—Although scarcely more than a generation had passed away since the death of Isaiah, when Josiah attempted his reformation, the moral state of Judah had grown sensibly worse. The evils which had long threatened the nation under the wicked king Manasseh, definitely showed themselves, and king and people openly threw off the restraints imposed by the religion of Jehovah, and made a public profession of idolatry. In the gloomy reign of terror which Manasseh inaugurated, Isaiah, and most of the nobler spirits who had gathered round him in the reign of Manasseh's father, Hezekiah, were hunted down and put to a cruel death. The swift and sudden judgment which overtook king and city seems to have acted as a solemn warning, and we read how Manasseh repented, and how, after his restoration to a throne in partial subjection to Nineveh, during a long life and reign, he and his people again served the Jehovah of their fathers. But the evil let loose by the strange and fearful licence of the early days of his reign was too strong, and the idol-worship and its terrible influence upon the hearts of the people, though outwardly put away, still exercised its baneful, withering power, till it had destroyed all that was left of real life in Judah.

But outwardly, after Manasseh and his son Amon had passed away, and Josiah, with his earnest longing to do what was right and just in the sight of the Lord, had come to the throne, all seemed well in Judah. Prosperity was returning; the old dark shadow of Nineveh, then beginning to decline in power, brooded with less and ever less baleful influence over Judah and its more remote tributaries. Egypt was scarcely then a real danger, and Josiah the king had at his right hand one of those strong mighty men of God, of whom we hear alone in that

eventful Israelite story—Jeremiah the prophet. It was in the thirteenth year of Josiah that the “Word of the Lord” came upon Jeremiah, and armed him for his life’s great work.

But all was wrong within the doomed land. To use the words of another and an older seer, “the whole head was sick, and the heart was faint.” Jerusalem—and Jerusalem set the example to all the smaller towns and cities—was full of licentiousness and open disregard for all equity and honour. Jeremiah even accuses the professing worshippers of the Lord of the gravest crimes, such as murder and adultery, perjury and theft. These wicked citizens were to have one last chance. The Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah and sent him to them with this last solemn message from the Eternal of Hosts. If they would hear him and repent, well; if not, the ruin and desolation of the land would surely follow. Alas for Judah! the message was practically disregarded, and the city and the glorious temple were ruined, and the king and people carried into captivity, far away from the Land of Promise, for many a weary year.

The earnest efforts of King Josiah and the great prophet who stood by him to reform the people failed. Outwardly some effect was produced. The open practice of idolatry was given up, the ceremonial part of God’s law was again performed with strict punctuality. But there, generally speaking, the work of reformation ended.

The people believed that this was enough to win for themselves and their land the splendid promises we read in Deuteronomy promised to the faithful and true Jew; but the weightier matters of the law, justice, purity, integrity, true nobleness of heart and purpose, were utterly neglected, and the old life, abhorred of God, went on as it did aforetime. No one saw this more clearly than did Jeremiah. He went on delivering his message, but as time passed by, and as the people’s guilt became heavier each year, and their own strange satisfaction with themselves continued, his words became more ominous, his general tone more and more despairing.

When all hope of a real reformation was given up by the man of God, then, like the captain of a ship which is plainly founders makes the last melancholy arrangements for his crew by means of open boats and rafts, so Jeremiah in his utter despair, hoping to make the impending ruin a less cruel fate, pressed upon the doomed people to submit without useless resistance to the powerful Chaldean invader, who, Jeremiah knew, with no mortal insight, was the appointed instrument of Judah’s punishment. But here again his voice was not heeded, and the awful doom in all its terrible detail was carried out.

What a heavy, overwhelming burden was laid on the patriotic prophet, to know of the frightful danger which hung over his loved Judah and Jerusalem, and the glorious holy house on Zion—an awful danger from that great nation whose sudden rise to enormous power he, Jeremiah, saw in the vista of no distant future, a vista clearly open to the seer's vision: a rise to colossal power vigorously portrayed by a seer contemporary with Jeremiah.

“Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.

“For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess dwelling-places that are not theirs.” (Habakkuk i. 5, 6.)

To know of this swift, oncoming danger, to know, too, that this impending danger might be warded off, and the help of the “Glorious Arm” once more vouchsafed to the loved city, if the people would only hearken to his words, and with heart and soul turn unto the Lord; to watch the people utterly careless and godless, growing year by year more self-satisfied as they grow more shameless; to be compelled, sick at heart and despairing, positively to preach as their best, their only hope, submission to an invader, an idolatrous conqueror, and even then to find his words disregarded, and himself positively branded as a traitor,—well might Jeremiah utter, at different epochs of that sad life of his, these well-known melancholy plaints: “Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed,” &c. (xx. 14); “Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day” (xiv. 17); “Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed?” (xv. 18.) See, too, viii. 22, ix. 1, and many other similar passages—some of an exquisite, an inimitable beauty—as he mourned over the coming doom of the hapless nation—a doom he, with all his supernatural knowledge and power, was utterly unable to avert.

A modern commentator has with great power summed up the reasons for the intense sorrow of the sad and touching prophecy of Jeremiah—prophecy quite unheeded and neglected in the great seer's lifetime, though afterward, when through pain and agony he had passed to his rest, this unheeded prophecy became the favourite book of the scattered and ruined people.

“His style is in keeping with the man. He spake as he thought. Ever brooding over his message to his people, it presented itself to his mind in many aspects, but was in substance ever the same; we have no change of subjects in his prophecy. Whatever there is of novelty arises simply from the altered state

of external circumstances. Slowly the sad drama advances towards the sole possible conclusion; year after year the prophet saw Judah sliding lower and lower down to the very edge of the fearful precipice of national ruin, and at each stage of its downward progress he could but repeat the old warning; like the Zealots who ran about the streets of Jerusalem before its second destruction, he has but the one cry of "Woe!" All he can do is to adapt his unvarying tale to the present state of things, and present it under new images."*

3. *Was Jeremiah's Life-work a Failure?*—Judged by the ordinary standards of success and failure, no public life could be painted which was more conspicuously an example of failure than the prophet Jeremiah's, as sketched out mainly by himself.

Called early in life, by some striking supernatural phenomenon, to his high service, the young seer thus splendidly gifted naturally expected a large measure of success. He had before his eyes the great example shown and the noble work done scarcely more than a generation back by the heroic and honoured Isaiah, when once more king and people with heart and soul had thrown themselves, in real faith, beneath the eternal throne of their Divine King; and once more, as in old days, the Glorious Arm had fought for them and won for them a deliverance the fame of which rung through the East and which procured for Judah some years of peace and prosperity. Surely the Word of the Lord had called him, Jeremiah, to a similar mighty work.

By his side, too, stood a king, Josiah, not unlike his famous predecessor, Hezekiah, who with real earnestness made it his life-work to remove every vestige of idolatry, and the infamy which hung round idol-worship, out of the land. It turned out very different, however, to his bright hopes; all seemed against him. As it has been truly said, "There are times when the Holy Spirit Himself seems to work in vain, and the world seems given up to the powers of evil." The strong efforts of the king and the burning words of the prophet only effected a popular reformation of ritual. Life remained untouched. The outward ceremonial religion was certainly restored in Judah and Jerusalem, but city and country still went on living the life abhorred of God. Josiah, the prophet's friend, the earnest and devoted king, was defeated and slain at Megiddo in the war with Egypt. Then things grew worse: Josiah's successor, the irreligious Jehoiakim, became the willing vassal of Egypt. He naturally

* Canon Rawlinson, in the "Speaker's Commentary."

disliked Jeremiah and poured scorn upon his prophecies. Then commenced what may be termed the second and saddest period of the prophet's life, when the Word of the Lord told him that the times of reformation were past, and that all hope of change of heart in Judah was over and gone. The seer had a bitter task before him. He would soften if he could the stroke ready to descend upon his nation, so he counselled submission to that great and warlike power, Babylon, the appointed instrument of the punishment of God. Again he was doomed to disappointment. The sovereign, the hierarchy, and the nobles utterly refused to listen to him, and chose rather to lean upon the broken reed of Egypt, their hereditary foe, and thus positively precipitated the final ruin, and Jeremiah for his wise advice was branded as a traitor to his country. During that long sad life of Jeremiah, made up of disappointments, baffled hopes, even despair, we catch sight of scenes of the bitterest persecution. Now the roll of his writings, with the impress of the seal of the Spirit of God visibly upon them, is publicly and ignominiously torn up and burnt; now we see him, one of the foremost statesmen, enduring the cruel indignity of the stocks; now we find him immured in a noisome, impure dungeon, now hunted down as a traitor and spy; and at last we see him, an old man worn out by sorrow and hopeless toil, carried away the captive of his determined opponents into Egypt, the land against which he had so often in vain warned his fellow-countrymen; and then in an unfriendly nation, surrounded by Jews, exiles and fugitives, among his bitterest foes, we lose sight of the great seer, still speaking words of tenderest warning and most earnest reminders to repentance. Tradition writes the last sad chapter of that sad, bravely patient life, and tells us how, in return for his true and faithful witness, his enemies stoned him to death.

In less than a century after the prophet's death, Jewish opinion respecting Jeremiah and his prophecies completely changed. On the return from Babylon, impressed no doubt by the marvellous fulfilment of the great seer's words respecting the duration of the seventy years' exile, his writings were received—most probably by Ezra and his revisionist scribes—among the sacred Hebrew writings; and in the Babylonian revision, strange to say, Jeremiah, not Isaiah, was placed first among the writings of the great prophets, the order being Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah.

The touching sadness and the burning faith of his words found a perpetual echo in the hearts of the restored and humbled Jews. Round him gathered a mass of reverent tradition. Men said he had taken the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense,

and had hidden them in a safe hiding-place somewhere among the rugged fastnesses of Mount Nebo, till the hour should strike when God shall gather together once more the people whom He loves (see 2 Macc. xi. 1—8). Jeremiah was that antique patriot hero who appeared to the gallant Judas Maccabæus as “a man with grey hairs, and exceeding glorious,” as one who “prayed much for the holy city.” Jeremiah was the prophet of the Lord who gave the same hero “a golden sword with which he shall fight the battles of the Lord” (2 Macc. xv. 13—16).

In the days of Jesus Christ, he, like Elijah, was looked for to prepare the way for Messiah. Some even said of Jesus that He *was* Jeremiah, or one of the prophets, Jeremiah being singled out of the glorious company as the most popular representative.

Even in early Christian story the once misjudged prophet played a distinguished part, and exposition pointed to Jeremiah as one of the “two witnesses” of Rev. xi. 3. Eusebius (*Praep. Evang.* ix. 39) relates how the story of his sufferings, so bravely and patiently endured, ranked alongside the more famous accounts of Christian martyrs.

Verily, though not here, not now, did this true servant of the Living God “see of the travail of his soul and was satisfied.”

4. *The Absence of Messianic Prophecy in Jeremiah.*—The almost entire absence of all reference to a coming Messiah in this book is on first thoughts remarkable. Different from his great predecessor Isaiah, who lived little more than a generation before him, the key-note of whose prophecy was the advent of the great coming One, though generally as a suffering teacher, who, though suffering, would redeem those who listen to him, than as a glorious and triumphing king. Different even from the rougher and shorter prophecies like Micah, where Messianic hopes colour, so to speak, each solemn section of the writing. Different to them, Jeremiah is almost silent. There is just a reference here and there as in xxx. 9, 21, xxxiii. 15, and a few similar passages, but the great bulk of the prophecies are silent as to Messianic onlook. The nature of his task, for the most part, alas! excluded hope. To speak of the victorious king would, in the case of Jeremiah’s hearers, have been but to raise fallacious expectations, and to tell so blind and stubborn, so self-willed and perfectly self-satisfied a generation, of salvation through suffering would have simply aroused a storm of contumely and of scorn.

Jeremiah’s task was not that of a herald of the great coming One; but though not a herald he was a pioneer, a pioneer of the truest kind. He lived that strange beautiful life of utter self-forgetfulness, of suffering voluntarily undergone for others. He set the example—an example imitated by thousands of his un-

happy countrymen in coming generations—of the purest and most devoted patriotism. See how closely did his typical life resemble in many particulars the inimitable life of lives. “He stood alone, with few friends and no family joys to console him; his country was hastening to its ruin at a crisis which strikingly reminds us of the times of our Saviour. He lifted up a warning voice, but the natural guides of the people drowned it by their blind opposition. . . . The prophet weeping over Zion, chap. ix. 1, xiii. 17, xiv. 17, is an adumbration of the sacred tears in St. Luke xix. 41.”*

The character of Jeremiah is a singularly interesting one. Different to Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, and the majority of the more prominent prophets of Israel, Jeremiah was, comparatively speaking, little influenced by those great powers of supernatural wisdom and of unerring insight down the dark vista of coming years. He was, so to speak, more human than the majority of his brothers in the glorious company of the prophets. Ever sensitive to public opinion, tender-hearted, even timorous, well-nigh always hopeless, we find him, in spite of these characteristics, unswervingly true to his high calling, never shrinking from carrying out his painful mission and proclaiming his unpopular message: a noble example, as it has been well said, of the triumph of the moral over the physical nature. His whole strength lay in his determination to do what was right at whatever cost.†

In the Sistine Chapel, where Michael Angelo has happily caught the spirit of Jeremiah, he is portrayed as brooding, with eyes cast down, in sad thought. It was, indeed, a sorrowful and a weary task for the patriot prophet to be for so many long years ever the prophet of ill, to be always foretelling a future in which the sword, the famine, and the pestilence were the chief agents.

Of the many devoted patriot hearts in the long, many-coloured story of the chosen people, none ever beat with a more passionate devotion for his country than did Jeremiah’s. It was his strange sad destiny to have given to him as his life-work the task of preaching to a people who would not hear him, and who, in their blind folly year by year, approached nearer the awful ruin which, as Jeremiah knew, hung over temple and city. No Jew has ever mourned with such true and tender sympathy over the lost glories and the sad and hopeless destinies of his race as did Jeremiah. His words, for centuries, were used as the expression of the thoughts of the exiled and down-trodden Hebrew. Again,

* Prof Cheyne, “*Jeremiah*,” in the “*Pulpit Commentary*,” vol. i. ch. xiv.

† Dean Payne Smith.

far beyond the Hebrew people, his beautiful and touching plaints have become folk-songs and folk-proverbs; such as:—

“ Is there no balm in Gilead;
 Is there no physician there?
 Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered ? ”
 (vii. 22.)

“ Stand ye in the ways, and see,
 And ask for the old paths, where is the good way,
 And walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.
 But they said, We will not walk therein.” (vi. 16.)

“ Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable ? ” (xv. 18.)

“ A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping ;
 Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children,
 Because they were not.” (xxxi. 15.)

5. *The Language and Style of Jeremiah.*—For general readers Jeremiah has far less interest than Isaiah or Daniel, and with the exception, perhaps, of Ezekiel, finds fewer students outside the Jewish world than any book of the Old Testament. Certain passages are very familiar, but, outside these, comparatively little is commonly known.

The language is charged with monotony and the style with diffuseness, as dealing with a period characterised with a dreary sameness of sin and folly, and unrelieved by any recitals of specially heroic deeds; and which, unlike to the usual story of Israel, is never illumined by any conspicuous interposition of the Glorious Arm of Jehovah.

To a considerable extent these and such-like popular criticisms are just. Its monotony could not be helped, for one subject, the sin of the people, their blindness and self-will, and the sure and certain ruin at the end of a comparatively speaking short period of time, too plainly foreseen, in all its melancholy details, by the prophet—one subject filled his heart from the hour of his first solemn call to that sad day when we lose sight of him, the unpopular prophet, the author—as some affirmed—of their woes, at Tahpanhes in Egypt.

To the ordinary Gentile reader, too, the prophecy of Jeremiah seems diffuse, for it is the same old story told again and again. It wants the art of Isaiah, and we miss the poetry and the lofty imagery which form the beautiful characteristic of so many passages in the other prophetic books. But it has been urged with great justice that in Jeremiah, “ His poetic flights were restrained by his presentiments, and his utterances dulled by tears. How could he exercise his imagination in depicting woes which he already so fully realised ? ” *

* Dean Payne Smith in “ Pulpit Commentary.”

Another commentator, with considerable truth, loves to compare this prophet with Dante, and thinks that in the pages of Jeremiah “the great Florentine found one of the founts of his inspiration, for he quotes him again and again, both in his poetry and in his prose, even borrowing from him the opening symbolism of the *Divina Commedia*.^{*}”*

6. *The Divergences between the Masoretic (Hebrew) and LXX. Greek Text.*—There are some curious divergences between the Masoretic text as contained in our Hebrew Bible (from whence our English Authorised Version was made) and the Greek text of the Septuagint. But although the variations are extremely numerous, and the position of a large section of the prophecy is different in the Greek and Hebrew, the variations are really of an unimportant description. We may fairly speak of the Masoretic (Hebrew), and the LXX. texts as being substantially the same.

All the chapters containing the group of the prophecies “on foreign nations” are differently arranged. In the Hebrew text this particular group is found in chapters xlvi.—li. In the LXX. they are found after chapter xxv. 13.

But the variations of the LXX. text are far more singular. It has been computed that the Greek (LXX.) version omits some 2,700 words of the Masoretic (Hebrew) text. It adds but a very few. Words and phrases which ever and again occur in the Hebrew are dropped in the Greek version. For instance, Jeremiah is rarely termed *the prophet*; Jehovah rarely has the title “of Hosts” added; the formula “saith Jehovah” is left out by the Greek translators more than sixty times. It would thus appear that, for some cause or other, the Greek text aimed at abbreviating the original Hebrew, but it evidently studiously avoided omitting anything which really bore on the sense. This careful abbreviation, which really only affected titles and redundant and purely rhetorical words and phrases, was a most valuable indication to us of the estimation in which the prophecies of Jeremiah were held when the LXX. translators did their work for the Greek-speaking Jews of Egypt, b.c. 285—150. With an evident strong desire, for some reason or other, to abbreviate as much as possible, they carefully refrained from taking away one of the precious sentences of the prophecies and exhortations of their loved and revered seer.

It is, of course, quite possible that two editors, so to speak, of Jeremiah existed, and that the LXX. translators had before them the shorter edition or revision. Dean Payne Smith, with great

* E. H. Plumptre, Dean of Wells.

ingenuity, suggests a reason for this "shorter edition." After the death (probably a violent death) of Jeremiah in Egypt, Baruch and the faithful companions of the prophet no doubt left in all haste a country so hostile to their loved master. Naturally they would carry back with them to Palestine, as their chiefest treasure, the writings of the great teacher. But among the fugitive Jews in Egypt there were doubtless "true believers, who would not allow such a precious document to be taken away without a copy being left behind." Such a transcript would in the nature of things be a hurried one; superfluous words and phrases, likely enough, would be omitted. Probably, too, no definite place in the writings had been at that time assigned to the "displaced" section containing "the prophecies concerning the nations," which, no doubt, possessed a less interest for the people than the inspired words relating to themselves. This is a most ingenious conjecture, but still only conjecture. The phenomenon of the strange divergence between the texts, the Hebrew and the Greek, of "Jeremiah" is really unexplained. The only two omissions, however, of any real importance are chapters xxxiii. 14—26, xxxix. 4—13.

7. *The Death of King Josiah.*—Between the life and work of Jeremiah and Isaiah there are many interesting parallel scenes, none perhaps so interesting for the general student as the life and fate of King Josiah. The two great prophets both lived through several reigns. In both instances these reigns, with one exception in each case, were productive of grave evil for Judah and Jerusalem, the sovereigns and their courts setting generally a shameful example. But one considerable portion of the life of both the prophets was passed in the company of a noble and heroic king, who loved the law of the Lord. In the midst of their successful and comparatively happy reigns the angel of death overshadowed Hezekiah and Josiah. Hezekiah, owing to the intercession of Isaiah, was spared for ten more glorious and successful years. Josiah, though acting under the direct advice of Jeremiah, was slain, fighting for his country, on the fatal field of Megiddo. Men are tempted to question often the Divine decree when a good and useful life is suddenly cut off. The death of Josiah, the favourite—as he has been termed—"of God and man," will supply an answer to such querulous questioning. We see the reason of his early death quite clearly. Josiah had done his work faithfully, but the work we know was a failure, and the hero-king was taken away from the evil to come. To have prolonged his life, like Hezekiah's, would have been a sad guerdon. The glorious death on the battle-field and the eternal hereafter with his God was for Josiah the best.

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

1. WHAT is the Book of Lamentations—that short collection of poems with no author's name appended to it in the Hebrew text? The Book of Lamentations consists of five elegies, carefully composed according to certain standards of Hebrew poetry. Three of these, the first, the second, and the fourth, have certain common characteristics. Each begins with the word “echah” (how). Each is of the peculiar form of Hebrew verse known as “alphabetical”—that is, every verse, or half verse, or little group of verses, begins with one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet: a not uncommon form of poetry, of which Psalm cxix. is the best known example. See also for examples, more or less perfect, of this alphabetical arrangement of poetry, Psalms xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii. cxix., cxlv., and Proverbs xxxi. 10—31. Slight irregularities in the arrangement, however, occur in these elegies.

2. Jerusalem, after the fall and ruin of the city at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans, long predicted by Jeremiah, is the general subject of all the five elegies; of the three, (first, second, and fourth), in which considerable points of likeness occur: the first dwells on the sad, ruined city, Zion. The second sings of the “fons et origo” of the woe of Zion—Jehovah, who at last has carried out the awful threats of punishment on a wicked people. The theme of the fourth depicts the sufferings of the various classes of the people at the hands of their conquerors.

The third of these elegies again is distinguished by the alphabetical structure of the poetry. It is even more artificial in its arrangement than the first, second, and fourth. It too dwells on the sorrow of the people, but it is more personal. The writer in this poem speaks of himself as “the man that has seen the affliction” (Lamentations iii.).

The fifth is different, in its composition: it is not strictly alphabetical, like the first four poems. Only in the number of

verses—twenty-two, the number of Hebrew letters—does it suggest the same artificial arrangement. The “ruin of Zion” is still the groundwork of the poem; but the writer, before the end of his sorrowful song, seems to speak as though this ruin was an event which had taken place years before (see verse 20).

3. *The Authorship of the Lamentations.*—The Septuagint (Greek version), B.C. *circa* 285, clearly states that the author of Lamentations was the Prophet Jeremiah. The seventy translators have prefixed the following words to their version: “And it came to pass after Israel was taken captive, and Jerusalem made desolate, that Jeremias sat weeping, and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said.” This statement is repeated in the Vulgate (Latin version) with some slight additions. Josephus, in the first century of our era, endorses the above Septuagint gloss, seemingly identifying these elegies with the “Lamentations” which, we read in 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, the Prophet Jeremiah composed for the funeral of King Josiah. The Talmudists also assume that Jeremiah was the author of the book (see Talmud, *Bava Bathra*, fol. 15, col. i.); and the general consensus of Jewish and Christian writers ascribe the five chapters of Lamentations to the same prophet.

One link, and that the most important, however, is missing in this chain of historic testimony. It does not appear in the Hebrew text which those most careful and painstaking Masoretic editors have given us, although, as it has been well urged, seeing that these Masoretic scribes, who no doubt (see reference above about Talmud, *Bava Bathra*) believed themselves in the Jeremiah authorship, would have been the last to have omitted this all-important testimony to the authorship. But the Hebrew text omits the name of Jeremiah.

4. *Internal Testimony.*—The whole style of these poems, though exquisitely beautiful and touching, and studded with the thoughts of the great prophet, is absolutely different to anything we find in the long roll of Jeremiah’s great work. It is too artificial, too much studied, too elaborately worked out. The internal evidence would seem to point to it having been the work of pious, cultured Jews, deeply imbued with the spirit and thought of Jeremiah; living at the time of the great catastrophe; eye-witnesses of the ruin wrought by Nebuchednezzar and the Chaldeans; not improbably pupils and friends of Jeremiah, but nameless, like so many of the Greek scribes and compilers who lived and worked contemporary with Ezra, or shortly after his time.

5. *Its Place in the Jewish Canon.*—It was evidently admitted into the canon of inspired writings at the earliest date, no doubt

by Ezra and the Men of the Great Synagogue; but these ancients never placed it in the position it now occupies in the Septuagint and Vulgate, or in an English Bible. It appears in the Masoretic (Hebrew) text between Ruth and Koheleth (Ecclesiastes), among the generally nameless K'thuvim or Hagiographa.

There is no question as to the high estimation in which these sweet sad songs were held by the people from very early days. It is evident that Zechariah at the end of the Captivity is quoting them in his first chapter, verse 6. On the 9th day of Ab, a very ancient fast-day, commemorating the burning of the Temple, these plaintive and touching Lamentations were read in the synagogues. Pilgrims, who after all these many centuries of exile, still gather in Jerusalem at the "place of wailing" by the wall which yet remains of the ruins of their holy beautiful house, are said to often use these sad songs as they weep and pray.

In the Latin Church in Holy Week the Book of Lamentations is used on the three last days of the week: and the Church of England, at the last revision* of her lectionary, has woven them into the beautiful tapestry of her services for the same solemn season.

* In the Revision of 1871, chapter iii. and portions of chapters i., ii., and iv. were ordered to be read on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week. Portions of Lamentations had been appointed to be read in Holy Week in the first book of Edward VI., but that use was not continued in the second book of Edward VI., or in any subsequent revision of the Prayer Book until 1871.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL.

1. **EZEKIEL**, as the book which bears his name stands in our own and the Hebrew canon, is the first prophet who proclaims his message from the land of his captivity. The Book of Daniel opens with the third year of Jehoiachin, but Ezekiel begins with the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity. Daniel, therefore, had probably preceded Ezekiel into exile, and undoubtedly outlived him, but they were in exile together, though far distant from each other. Ezekiel was of priestly family, the son of Buzi. As, however, the name of his father is not otherwise mentioned in Scripture, we know no more about him. In the Jerusalem Targum the son of Buzi (the despised one) is interpreted to mean the son of Jeremiah, because he was despised. This is, of course, of no other value than as showing that there was a kind of natural succession in the two men.

In the narrative of Jehoiachin's captivity, in the Book of Kings, no mention is made of any priests among the captives, but only of "princes," "officers," and "mighty men of valour," among whom rather than the "craftsmen and smiths" Ezekiel must have found his place, being, as Josephus says, "then but young" (Ant. x. 6, 3). The prophet describes himself as among the captives by the river of Chebar, which has by some been identified with the Chaboras or Khabour, a tributary of the Euphrates, flowing into it near Circesium, Carchemish, Karkisia; but as this river is said to have been "in the land of the Chaldees," and it is doubtful whether the Khabour was included in that district, it has been supposed that the river Chebar may be identified with the Nahr Malcha or royal canal, which was cut by the order of Nebuchadnezzar, and in making which many Jews were not improbably employed. As Chebar was equivalent to "great," it is quite possible that this name may have been applied to that canal as well as to any other large river of the country, but it does not help us to any nearer identification of Ezekiel's abode. All that is certain seems to be the impossibility

of identifying this latter river with the “*Halah and Habor* by the river of *Gozan*” to which Shalmaneser transported the Israelites in the reign of Hezekiah. The initial letters in the two words are totally different, and by no means to be confounded. There is, however, an inherent difficulty in supposing that an artificial canal was magnified by the designation “great river,” though as a matter of fact the word *nahar* is common to both. (Cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 1.)

2. *Date.*—Ezekiel begins his prophecy with very precise specification of the year, month, and day in which the heavens were opened and he saw the visions of God; but though he says it was the thirtieth year we are at a loss to know from what date it is to be reckoned, whether from his own birth or, as some have supposed, from the finding of the law in the Temple, or, as others have conjectured, from the era of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, who came to the throne B.C. 625, which would all nearly correspond. This question, however interesting, is the less important, inasmuch as the thirtieth year is further specified as the fifth year of Jehoiachin’s captivity. As, however, no other indication whatever of date is given by the prophet, it seems most natural to understand the thirtieth year as that of his own age. As this was the time at which the Levites entered on their service (Num. iv. 23, 30) it seems to give a very probable date. This was also the age at which our Lord began His ministry (Luke iii. 23).

That the prophet should without any notice make mention of a Babylonian era, which may or may not have been in ordinary use, seems highly improbable; and there is no evidence that any particular era was in use among the Jews, and no reason to believe that the finding of the Book of the Law would have furnished the basis of such an era. From his frequent mention of the sons of Zadoc (xl. 46; xlivi. 19; xliv. 15, 16) as the priests, it is supposed that he was himself of this family. There is no reference to him in the canonical books of the Old Testament, though he makes mention himself of his contemporary Daniel, and in the enumeration of the worthies in Eccl. xlii. 8, 9, he is spoken of as he “who saw the glorious vision which was showed him upon the chariot of the cherubims, for he made mention of the enemies under the figure of the rain, and directed them that went aright.” (See xiii. 11; xxxviii. 9, 22, &c.) Ezekiel was partly contemporary with Jeremiah and Daniel, but Jeremiah had begun to prophesy thirty-four years before Ezekiel, and continued to do so for some six or seven years after his first vision; and as Daniel lived till the third year of Cyrus (Dan. x. 1), he in all probability long survived Ezekiel, the commencement

of whose ministry, as we have seen, nearly corresponded with that of his own captivity.

3. *His Name.*—As was so often the case with the prophets and other biblical celebrities, the name of Ezekiel was significant, though in this instance its significance was of general rather than specific appropriateness. There is always room for doubt as to the exact way in which the component words are intended to be understood in the case of proper names, and all that we can be sure of here is the existence of the two elements, “God,” and the verb “strengthen,” in the name Ezekiel, but whether it implied that God would strengthen, or “prevail,” or “hold by the hand,” it is difficult to say. Freely, the name might be understood to mean the “strength of God,” but what was the more precise significance of the word it would be hard to determine. In probable reference to his own name, Ezekiel says of himself, in iii. 14, “the hand of the Lord was strong upon me.” (Cf. vv. 8, 9.) In 1 Ch. xxiv. 16, we find mention made of a priest of this name in the time of David; but, with this exception, the prophet stands alone as the bearer of it.

4. *Personal Details.*—In reading Ezekiel it is always to be borne in mind that he was distant in *space* from the scenes he describes, *e.g.* in ch. xxiv. he is bidden to name a particular day, which was found afterwards to be the very day when the siege of Jerusalem began, he being then in the land of his captivity by the river Chebar. In like manner, in ch. viii. he describes in detail the idolatrous abominations perpetrated in the temple at Jerusalem, which he is shown in vision, though far away. The latest date given in the book is the twenty-seventh year of Jehoiachin’s captivity, 527 B.C. (ch. xxix. 17). This is seventeen years later than the date of the first verse of the same chapter. The vision of the restored temple (ch. xl.) is dated in the 25th year.

We learn incidentally from ch. xxiv. 18 that Ezekiel was married, and that his wife died in the ninth year of his exile, 590 B.C.; also from iii. 24; viii. 1, that though in exile he nevertheless had a house of his own. Probably, therefore, the condition of the captives, at all events in certain cases, was not an oppressive one, but its bitterness consisted in expatriation from the land of their fathers, which was itself intolerable to the Jew with his highly developed and sensitive patriotic feelings. Of Ezekiel’s later history nothing is known. There is every reason to believe that he died in exile, where it is evident that he was recognised as a prophet and held in honour by his fellow countrymen, as we see by the fact of the elders of the nation often assembling themselves to receive his prophetic counsels and admonitions. As these were by no means of chastened severity,

it is plain that his position was sufficiently well established to make it possible for them to be delivered without fear, and received without questioning or dispute (viii. 1; xiv. 1; xx. 1; xxxiii. 30).

No stress can be laid upon a tradition which has been preserved that he died a martyr, being put to death by one of the chief men of the Jewish people on account of his prophecies. Josephus, as we have seen, calls him a "boy" when he went into exile, but as his prophetic career does not seem to have extended over more than twenty-two years (xxix. 17), we must either suppose him to have died very young or must assume that the expression of Josephus is to be interpreted with considerable latitude.

It is not improbable that the call of Ezekiel to the prophetic office may have had some connection with the communication of Jeremiah's predictions to Babylon, which took place in the year preceding Ezekiel's visions (Jer. li. 59; cf. xxix. 21—28), if not in the way of cause and effect, at all events as taking up the note of warning and denunciation, and carrying on the message of prophecy. Ezekiel, however, does not mention Jeremiah, nor does Jeremiah mention Ezekiel.

The three prophets, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, correspond generally to the prophets of the previous century, who flourished before and after the captivity of Israel, namely, Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah, but in every case the individuality is too strongly marked to make any closer relation possible. For instance, the silence of Ezekiel with regard to his personal history contrasts strongly with the diffuseness of Jeremiah in this respect, whose personal history is largely contained in his writings. This contrast of individual character is the more interesting, inasmuch as it shows that in selecting His human agents the Spirit of God does not obliterate individual characteristics.

5. *Canonicity.*—The genuineness of Ezekiel's writings has been little disputed. It is chiefly the last nine chapters, in themselves sufficiently perplexing and mysterious, that have been impugned, and they only by a few rash critics of no great name. The canonicity of the book is established by Jewish and Christian authorities. There is, indeed, no express reference to it or quotation from it in the New Testament, but the following passages apparently refer to it:—Rom. ii. 24, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written" (cf. Ezek. xxxvi. 20—23); Rom. x. 5, Gal. iii. 12, "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them." (See Lev. xviii. 5, and Ezek. xx. 11, 21, &c. Cf. also 1 Pet. iv. 17, Ezek. ix. 6;

and 2 Pet. iii. 4, Ezek. xii. 22.) It is obvious also that there is a general correspondence between parts of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse of St. John.

6. *Analysis and Contents.*—There are four main divisions of the book. 1. Chaps. i.—xxiv. chiefly directed against the Israelites and specially the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the only exception is the discourse against the Ammonites in chap. xxi. 28—32, or in the Heb. xxi. 33—37. There is often a date given of the year, month, and day, reckoning, as has been said, from Jehoiachin's captivity. In this section the people are reproached for their sins, idolatry, sun-worship, &c., which was carried on by the elders, especially Jaazaniah, the son of Shaphan (viii. 11). Zedekiah is reproached with his Egyptian alliance (xvii. 15, &c.), which is so far evidence of Ezekiel's acceptance of Jeremiah's prophetic authority, who had consistently discouraged this alliance with Egypt. The prophet threatens him with captivity (ver. 20), as he had previously done with dying in the land without seeing it (xii. 13). In xxi. 25, he is also severely threatened and virtually deposed in language which is at once a distinct reference to the prophecy of Jacob (Gen. xl ix. 10), and the basis of the angelic announcement (Luke i. 12—33). Chap. xx. is that which so mysteriously foretells the dispersion among “the wilderness of the peoples,” not “people,” as A.V.; a dispersion which had already begun in the prophet's own day, but which was to be continued for long ages till our own and our children's days possibly, to be followed (ver. 41) by some signal manifestation of divine action which should declare God's ways as plainly as the first return from captivity which was distinctly promised (vi. 8, 9; xxii. 16). Chap. xxi. represents the king of Babylon as hesitating whether to go up against Jerusalem or Rabbath first. He decides for the former (ver. 22), but the prophet assures the Ammonites that they shall not escape (ver. 28). This accounts for the apparent interruption of a series of prophecies otherwise directed wholly against Israel. Chap. xxii. declares the judgment of the “bloody city.” Chap. xxiii. relates the idolatrous apostasy of Aholah, “her tent,” and Aholibah—“my tent is in her,” or of Israel (Samaria) and Judah (Jerusalem), under the image of two women thus named. Chap. xxiv. contains the death of the prophet's wife.

This ends the first division of the book; the second includes chaps. xxv.—xxxii., which are chiefly prophecies against foreign nations, that in chap. xxv. against the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites and Philistines is without date. Chaps. xxvi., xxvii. and xxviii. are against Tyre and Zidon, and are dated in the eleventh year. Chaps. xxix.—xxxii. are against Egypt and

Pathros, and dated in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth year, with the exception of xxix. 17, which is dated the twenty-seventh year, and is the latest in the whole book. It is probably inserted here for the sake of uniformity, and to bring together prophecies relating to the same subject. The prediction in verses 13—15 cannot be understood literally, but must be taken as showing that Egypt shall be dealt with somewhat after the analogy of Israel with a definite period of political extinction.

The third section extends from chap. xxxiii. to chap. xxxix. Chap. xxxiii. 1—20, declares the office of a watchman; chap. xxxiv. reproves the shepherds of Israel and promises to raise up one shepherd, even David. As it is utterly impossible that this could have been understood, or meant to be understood, literally, it is the more remarkable as a witness to the hope that still centred in the house of David and the more significant in relation to Christ. Chap. xxxv. relates to the ancient enmity of Edom, which broke out against Israel when the troubles of the Exile fell upon the nation, as is so often alluded to in Scripture, and threatens the desolation of the country. (Of. xxv. 12—27; Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Obadiah 10; Mal. i. 2, &c.) Chap. xxxvi. continues the promise of God's care for Israel with that of the new heart and the outpoured spirit. Chap. xxxvii. has the vision of the resurrection of the dry bones, and under the figure of the union of two sticks (ver. 16) is prophesied the restored union of Israel under one head, "my servant David." Chaps. xxxviii. and xxxix. are occupied with the promised overthrow of Gog and Magog. The latter name is found in Gen. x. 2; but Gog is only known elsewhere as the name of a Reubenite (1 Chron. v. 4). Both names are adopted by St. John (Rev. xx. 8).

We now come to the last division of Ezekiel's prophecies, the most obscure and enigmatical of all—his vision and description of the restored Temple (chap. xl.—xlviii.), about which certain facts must be borne in mind. First, it is perfectly certain that the details of this vision were not accepted as the basis of the restored Temple. It is quite certain that the Jews who returned must have been acquainted with Ezekiel's prophecies and with this portion of his book. It is no less certain that when the Temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, he was guided by wholly different plans and directions, in fact that he followed the main features of Solomon's Temple, that original edifice which many of the returning captives still remembered.

This of itself is no slight evidence of the existence at that time of prescriptions and regulations which were then regarded as of higher authority even than Ezekiel's. It is hard to believe that the plans and directions which were followed in the building

of the second Temple were themselves of no more ancient origin, if those of Ezekiel's vision were set aside in favour of them. But, secondly, it is no less clear that the arrangements of Ezekiel's vision were physically impossible to be complied with. For instance, the boundaries of the city and Temple in the vision are quite different from what they were actually, and the Temple was outside the city. The Temple was several miles north of the city, and the city several miles north of the site of Jerusalem; the natural boundaries of the western sea and the Jordan were too narrow by several miles to allow of the assignment made for the Temple and the priests and Levites.

The portions of the tribes were arranged in total disregard of the allotments made by Joshua. Each tribe was to have a portion of equal width. The seven tribes of Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, and Judah, were to be on the right of the Temple and its precincts—"the oblation"; and the five others, Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad on the south. The restoration of animal sacrifices is provided for in the ordinances of the Temple in the prophet's vision. The Ark of the Covenant is not mentioned, and there is no high priest; only the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles are named, not Pentecost nor the Great Day of Atonement; but a new feast is instituted on the first and ninth days of the first month, when a solemn purification for the sanctuary was to take place for those who had sinned through error (xlv. 20).

It is remarkable that Ezekiel speaks in this chapter of a new functionary, whom he calls the prince, *nasi*, to whom a large portion of land east and west of the oblation for the priests and Levites is assigned, and whose duty it is to provide the sacrifices. Here again it is only possible to interpret these features spiritually. In later times the head of the Sanhedrim who filled a very different office, was called by this name. The mediatorial function, which is assigned to this personage in the vision of Ezekiel, is very remarkable.

In the forty-seventh chapter we have the vision of the living waters which flowing eastwards from under the altar rapidly become an impassable stream, which flows into the Dead Sea and makes it sweet. This is manifestly the original of St. John's vision in the last chapter of the Revelation. It is to be observed that all the latter chapters of Ezekiel, whatever may be their interpretation, are only to be understood on one assumption, that, namely, of the restoration of the Temple and the reoccupation of the land. When we bear in mind that the latest date in Ezekiel's prophecies was some three years before the release of Jehoiachin from prison, this expression of confident hope is the

more remarkable, and is certain proof of the influence of Jeremiah's promise of the restoration. (Cf. Daniel ix. 2.)

Ezekiel's writings as a whole have probably commended themselves to a more limited circle of readers than those of Isaiah and Jeremiah, in consequence of the detailed accounts of his visions, which are at all times difficult to realise, but they nevertheless abound in passages of permanent and universal interest, and when regarded as a whole with reference to the time and conditions under which they were penned they fill a conspicuous and important part in the economy of revelation, and are of no inconsiderable value for the clear evidence they afford of the acquaintance with the law of Moses which the children of Israel must have carried with them into the land of their exile. (Cf. chs. xviii., xx., xxii. *e.g.*)

THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

1. THE Book of Daniel stands in the Hebrew canon among the Hagiographa or Sacred Writings, which are specially so called in distinction to the Law and the Prophets, not as implying any greater degree of sanctity, but as claiming an actual and independent sanctity for them, notwithstanding their position as third in the scale. In that canon the position of Daniel is after Esther and before Ezra. In the Septuagint and Vulgate, as also in Luther's version, its place is among the four greater prophets after Ezekiel, which is its natural chronological position, supposing Daniel to have been an historical character and this book a genuine production by him, for though Daniel's career began earlier than Ezekiel's, he no doubt long survived him, as he lived to witness the return of his countrymen in consequence of the edict of Cyrus, b.c. 536 (Dan. i. 21 ; x. i.).

It consists of twelve chapters, which are written partly in Hebrew and partly in that Aramaic dialect commonly called Chaldee, which the Jews seemed to have acquired, and more or less adopted, in the land of their captivity. The first six chapters relate matters of fact of a substantive nature ; the last six contain various visions which were vouchsafed to Daniel. The former half is divided into several sections, loosely joined together without any formula of transition or even a connecting particle except between the first and second chapters. In fact, they form complete narratives in themselves, but they follow on in natural sequence, so that the former chapters are presupposed in the latter.

2. *Authenticity, Genuineness, and Integrity.*—This book has uniformly been ascribed to Daniel by the combined testimony of the Jewish and Christian Churches. In recent years, however, this judgment has been utterly reversed. As the issues depending upon it are very important, it is desirable to enter into this question at some length. There are three questions involved, (1) the authenticity, (2) the genuineness, and (3) the integrity

of the book. By its authenticity we mean its trustworthiness as a record of fact; by its genuineness, that it is rightly ascribed to its supposed author; and by its integrity, that it is an original whole, and not the casual combination of distinct and independent parts. It is important to point out that the questions of authenticity and genuineness are, to a large extent, interdependent; that is to say, if the book is authentic, it can hardly be other than genuine, and if it is genuine we may take it for granted that it is authentic.

If Daniel wrote this book we may well hesitate to question its details; and if its details are trustworthy, there is no one to whom we are so likely to be indebted for them as to Daniel—to his presiding supervision and care, if not to his personal authorship. It should also be clearly noted that in the historic credibility of the book, or, in other words, its authenticity, is inseparably bound up the due recognition of the miraculous. The stories of the deliverance of Daniel's companions from the fiery furnace and of himself from the den of lions, are such as to baffle all explanation to account for them. We are challenged by the writer on the most definite issue to determine whether they occurred as facts or did not occur. If they occurred as facts then they are miracles and can be nothing else; if they did not occur, then the story relating them must be a romance, a fiction, or a myth, and it can be nothing else. These stories, of all others in Scripture, the most resolutely refuse to yield to any process or theory which, accepting them as artistic sketches, with a moral and didactic purpose, nevertheless denies to them the weight of historic reality, and dissipates their substantial worth as actual occurrences.

The Book of Daniel, therefore, offers a crucial test on many points which are directly or implicitly denied in the present day. Nor must we imagine that it is only in the present day that the severity of this test is felt. There never can have been a time when it was really more easy to believe the story of the deliverance from the fiery furnace than it is now, if the imagination truly grappled with it; but when the truth of Daniel was first impugned, it was rather on the prophetic than the historic ground. Porphyry, who died A.D. 304, wrote fifteen books against the religion of Christ, and the whole of his twelfth book was taken up with an attack on the genuineness of Daniel. He maintained that it was written by a Jew in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and for this reason it seemed to predict truly up to this point, but falsely afterwards. The Book of Daniel, then, raises a definite issue on the subject of miracles and prophecy; if it is genuine it is absolutely impossible to refuse to

acknowledge either ; and for this reason it is easy to see that a disposition to reject either may well tend to a prejudgment of the genuineness or authenticity of Daniel, not on the actual merits of the question, but in accordance with preconceived opinions upon miracles and prophecy.

3. *Canonicity*.—Our business, however, is with the grounds upon which Daniel has been accepted as canonical and believed as an integral part of the Holy Scripture. And these are two-fold : (a), external ; (b), internal.

(i.) It must be admitted that externally the Book of Daniel comes to us as well authenticated as any other canonical book. First, there is the reference in the first Book of Maccabees, ii. 59, 60, “Ananias, Azarias, and Misael by believing were saved out of the flame ; Daniel for his innocence was delivered from the mouths of lions.” This is mentioned in conjunction with David and Elias, and it is evidently regarded as of the same character and authority as what is related of them. It is true, of course, that the speech in which it occurs may be an imaginary one of the writer’s, which he has put into the mouth of the dying Mattathias, but at all events we must regard it as one which he might have spoken.

At this time, therefore, the historian saw nothing improbable in Mattathias being acquainted with the history of Daniel, and as we have no history in which these events are recorded but this Book of Daniel, he must have learnt them from it, and at any rate proof is afforded that when the book of Maccabees was written the canonical position of Daniel was secure. Now the first Book of Maccabees was probably written in the last quarter of the second century before Christ, that is to say, about two generations after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. It follows therefore that, if Daniel was a late production, it had managed to work its way into reception on a level with the rest of Scripture in the short space of sixty or seventy years. This is by no means likely, as the first Book of Maccabees itself was not so received, nor is there any reason to believe that any other book of the same period was allowed a place in the canon.

(ii.) Again, this first Book of Maccabees not only presupposes the existence of Daniel, which it does merely as a matter of independent testimony, just as Milton’s allusion to Shakespeare proves that he lived after Shakespeare’s time, but it displays acquaintance also with the Alexandrian version of the book, so that the Semitic original must have been in existence long enough to find a place in an authorised translation like that of the LXX. ; e.g. in 1 Macc. i. 54 we read that “ they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar,” meaning no doubt the

heathen idol, and quoting the remarkable words of Dan. xi. 31, as they are in the Greek (cf. Dan. ix. 27). So in 1 Macc. ix 40, the words *καὶ ἐπεσον τραυματίαι πολλοί* are an echo of the Greek of Dan. xi. 26, *καὶ πεσονται τραυματίαι πολλοί*, and in 1 Macc. ix. 27 there is close correspondence with the language of Dan. xii. 1. It seems, therefore, fairly certain that the writer of the first Book of Maccabees was acquainted with the Greek version of Daniel, which necessitates an earlier existence of the book than the age of Antiochus Epiphanes, even if the Septuagint version itself is not of earlier date than that.

(iii.) The narrative in Josephus (Ant. xi. 8, 5), that when Alexander the Great in his conquering march came to Jerusalem, the Book of Daniel was shown to him, and that he took to himself the prophecy in it that a Greek should destroy the Persian empire, and was much pleased therewith, is clear proof that in the opinion of Josephus the book was in existence then, whether or not we accept the story, while it shows that he could have known of no incident or tradition which made its existence then impossible. As a matter of historical fact, however, it is true that Alexander treated the Jews with marked favour, which gives some colour of probability to the story of Josephus, and itself must be accounted for by some predisposing cause such as this would have furnished.

(iv.) Lastly, had Daniel first appeared in Maccabean times, as the natural product of them, there would probably have been other books of a like kind, but we have no evidence of any, and therefore this book must stand entirely alone if not genuine, and however appropriate certain portions may be to the requirements of that time, it is hard to see the special bearing of others upon them, and therefore the theory of Maccabean origin, while it affords a plausible motive for some parts, offers no explanation of others which are equally characteristic, any more than it explains why the one part should have been linked so closely with the other, if it was not a whole from the beginning.

It is important to estimate these positive and substantive facts at their true value, because they seem to furnish definite material, which it is alike impossible to set aside and to reconcile with any theory of the late origin of Daniel. However we are to deal with the miraculous and prophetic elements of the book, it is at all events not fair to minimise the value of these facts in order to depreciate the ostensible importance of the miracles and prophecies contained in it. If we are honest and earnest students, therefore, we cannot ignore the fact that the external testimony, direct and indirect, to the existence of Daniel at a time antece-

dent to the age of Antiochus Epiphanes is very strong. It would certainly be held to be conclusive in the absence of any motives for setting it aside.

(v.) Another point deserves to be more carefully noted than it seems commonly to have been. We have in the prophet Ezekiel distinct reference to the existence of the prophet Daniel in his time. In the fourteenth chapter he twice couples him with Noah and Job, as a notable instance of deliverance, and in chap. xxviii. 3, he says of Tyre, "Behold thou art wiser than Daniel, there is no secret that they can hide from thee." Ezekiel and Daniel were contemporaries. It is plain that Ezekiel knew of Daniel as one who had either wrought some great deliverance for others, or had been himself the subject of it, and also as of one who was a great revealer of secrets. Now we may not assume that Ezekiel was acquainted with the Book of Daniel, but as these are the only two references we have to Daniel in the Hebrew literature, we must either assume, if the book was late in date, that it was a story based entirely on these two meagre and fragmentary references to the history of Daniel, which were consequently sufficient to supply the foundation and framework of it, or else that more extensive traditions sufficient for supplying it were in existence, and had survived in adequate measure for the space of three centuries and a half till they suggested the remarkable compilation which we now know as the Book of Daniel.

It seems to me that this is a point that is well worthy of note, and we may be absolutely certain that the writer of Daniel in the second century before Christ either fabricated his romance entirely out of the materials supplied by Ezekiel, or else made use of traditions of which there is no trace elsewhere, or else gave the rein to his imagination to create a story in substantial agreement with the brief allusions to Daniel in Ezekiel. I do not believe that any of these courses was probable or possible, nor do I believe that the whole compass of literature supplies any case corresponding to what this would have been. The fact that certain stories, such as that of Bel and the Dragon, and of Susanna, became attached to the Book of Daniel, but did not find a place in the Hebrew canon, serves at least to show that there was felt to be an intrinsic difference between them, whether it was that of age or anything else, and neither of these stories can have originated in the way it is assumed that the Book of Daniel arose from a desire to encourage the Jews when suffering under the severities of the Antiochian persecution, though indeed it is useless to speculate as to what may or may not have been the possible origin of any book whose apparent and traditional origin is disputed.

4. *Arguments on the Other Side.*—The arguments which are advanced against the genuineness of the Book of Daniel are as follows:

(i.) The fact that its place in the Hebrew canon is not among the Prophets but in the so-called Sacred Writings, is advanced to show that the book was not known when the division was made which consisted of the writings of the Prophets. This may possibly have been made by Ezra or Nehemiah somewhere about 450 B.C., or more than one hundred years after the age of Daniel. In the Septuagint version, however, which was probably made in the third century B.C., Daniel follows Ezekiel as he does in our own version. And it is a very reasonable explanation of the place of Daniel in the Hebrew canon, that he was not officially a prophet with a distinct call, as is recorded in the case of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, but only a prophet in virtue of his gifts. His book is regarded rather as an historical treatise, and therefore is classed with those of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. In like manner, though Daniel was pre-eminently a prophet and acknowledged as a prophet, he is not classed among the prophets in the canon, but is placed in the forefront of the "Sacred Writings." I think it is obvious that these two considerations entirely neutralise any impression arising from the position of Daniel in the Hebrew canon, and fully account for it.

(ii.) A second reason is conceived to exist in the silence of Jesus the son of Sirach, in Ecclus. xl ix., when the worthies of Israel are enumerated. The entire passage extends from chap. xliv. to chap. l. Daniel, however, is not the only name omitted; no mention is made of Esther or of Mordecai, whereas Nehemiah finds his place somewhat inappropriately between Zerubbabel and Enoch. It is manifest that no valid argument can be raised on this circumstance, seeing that the entire catalogue is of a rhetorical character, and the selection made on arbitrary principles. The date of Ecclus. is probably about 180—200. If, therefore, Daniel was of the age suggested, and not genuine, this would of course account for the silence of the son of Sirach, though of course it may very well arise from other causes. Clearly, if we are right in assigning the LXX. translation to the third century B.C., the place of Daniel in that version is alone conclusive as furnishing positive evidence to his existence in opposition to the negative evidence deduced from the silence of the son of Sirach.

And it must always be remembered that Ezekiel was manifestly acquainted with a Daniel, whether or not the book bearing his name has a right to be received as genuine. Indeed, as I have already stated, the reference made by Ezekiel is altogether inexplicable, if the Book of Daniel is a forgery of the second

century B.C. Who was the Daniel to whom Ezekiel refers? and how is it that being so eminent as he clearly was we know nothing whatever about him? If he was held worthy of being classed with Noah and Job, how is it that tradition was absolutely silent as to his history for some four centuries, till it suddenly blazed forth in the age of Antiochus Epiphanes with this profusion of supernatural incident and enigmatical prediction?

(iii.) Thirdly, it is said that there is no mention of Daniel in Haggai, Zechariah, or Malachi. But why is it necessary to suppose there should have been, considering the specific character of these writers and the brevity of their writings? There is no mention of Ezekiel in Jeremiah, or of Jeremiah in Ezekiel, though they were contemporary. To all appearance, however, this negative feature is more than neutralised by what is probably a verbal reference to Daniel in Nehemiah. The words of Nehemiah (i. 5) are a reproduction of Daniel (ix. 4), and the peculiar phrase, "great and terrible God," is used only in Deuteronomy and in this place of Daniel. The position in which Nehemiah found himself was not unlike that of Daniel, and so far calculated to bring to his recollection the words of Daniel. In Nehemiah ix. 32, we see also that Nehemiah has adopted an alteration of Deut. vii. 9, which Daniel has made in ix. 4. If in the former instance we might question which of the two was the original, there is hardly the same opportunity of doing so here, where we seem to have the result of a longer and wider experience. It is, moreover, at least probable that two of Zechariah's visions are more or less adapted and borrowed from Daniel (Zech. i. 18—21; vi. 1—5), and if this is so, we have quite as much indication of acquaintance with Daniel in the post-Captivity prophets as we can reasonably expect. Indeed, the visions of Zechariah may very well be thought to lean upon those of Ezekiel and Daniel.

It has even been suggested that the frequent asseverations of truth are blinds to conceal a consciousness of falsehood on the part of the writer. This only shows the perversity of the spirit of the objector, just as, in certain chapters of Isaiah, we are asked to believe them not genuine because they do not claim to be his; whereas in chapters like the thirteenth and fourteenth, which do claim to be his, the authority of the superscription is without scruple set aside. Doubtless, had there been no vouchers for truthfulness in Daniel, that would have been advanced as an indication of spuriousness, just as the frequency of them is construed into a tacit admission of forgery. So just and appropriate is our Lord's remark: "Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the market-place and

crying unto their fellows : We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced ; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." So difficult is it to conceive the circumstances in which the excuse for objection should not arise.

It is to be remembered that, with regard to the Book of Daniel, the question as to its date lies only between the actual date, which we may suppose to be that of the old age of Daniel, or about the middle of the sixth century B.C., and that of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes (163 B.C.), a distance of more than three centuries and a half. No other date has ever been suggested ; but it is not hard to see that, even conceding the latter date as the true one, there is a distinct prophecy as early as the second chapter, which probably reappears afterwards, that renders absolutely futile any such hypothesis, for it is not possible to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream without perceiving that the rise of the Christian Church as a kingdom that should last for ever is definitely promised therein.

Of course, in the case of any prophecy, no matter how close its correspondence with what purports to be its fulfilment, it is always possible, on *a priori* grounds, to affirm that the fulfilment does not establish the prophecy, because we cannot be certain that it was so fulfilled. The correspondence may be fortuitous, but for all that there is a natural inability in the human mind to reject the inference which forces itself on us in consequence of any such correspondence, especially when repeated again and again. An aggregate of threads, each of which may be weak in itself, is yet strong enough to hold the mind enchain'd ; and there can be no doubt that prophecy may not only be regarded as one of such threads, but also that this particular prophecy is really one of the strongest of them ; and though it may be unwise to dwell with too great exclusiveness even on this indication of antecedent design, it is equally unwise to shut our eyes altogether to the cogency of it.

The Book of Daniel, like that of Ezra, is written partly in Hebrew and partly, as already stated, in the Aramaic dialect, commonly called Chaldee. Some have affirmed that the Chaldee of Daniel is a disguised imitation of that of Ezra ; but sufficient linguistic differences have been pointed out to negative this assumption. These differences are, indeed, slight, and the Chaldee of Ezra and Daniel is more nearly alike than that of either is to the language of the oldest of the Chaldee Targums. There is reason to believe that neither the Hebrew nor the Chaldee of Daniel was in use in the time of the Maccabees, and hence the notion of a Maccabean origin for the Book of Daniel is rendered the more improbable.

5. *Analysis.*—In attempting to analyse the Book of Daniel, it is as difficult to discover on what principle the transition from the Hebrew to the Chaldee is made, as it is to decide why the narrative passes from the third person to the first. The book opens in Hebrew, and passes on to Chaldee at chap. ii. 4, but at chap. viii. 1, it reverts to Hebrew, which is maintained to the end of the book. On the other hand, the third person is uniformly adopted in the first six chapters and the first verse of chap. vii., when the narrative is continued in the first person and maintained throughout, except at viii. 1, and x. 1, where both forms may be said to be combined: “a vision appeared unto me, Daniel . . . and I saw;” “a thing was revealed unto Daniel . . . in those days I Daniel.” It is to be observed from this fact that the two parts are the more closely welded together, inasmuch as the use of the two languages and the two moods of narration characterise both parts, regarding the end of chap. vi. as the most natural and obvious division.

The first division contains Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams and the interpretations of them, and the narrative of the deliverance of Daniel and his companions in a miraculous manner; but the second part of the book is almost exclusively occupied with an account of the visions vouchsafed to Daniel. In the eleventh chapter these take the form of a communication made to him by an angel, who relates in detail, as it seems, the history of the Seleucian kings. There can be no doubt that this, in any aspect, is one of the most remarkable chapters of Scripture. If the book is not genuine, this chapter is the most audacious of forgeries; but if genuine, it can only be regarded as the most extraordinary of prophecies—in fact, it may claim to be altogether unique; and yet we can only, on the most arbitrary principles, venture to regard this chapter as an interpolation, and suppose that it warrants us in calling in question the integrity of the book. It is absolutely impossible to sever this chapter from its surroundings; it must stand or fall with the rest of the book.

To any one who is at all open to belief, the question of the genuineness of Daniel is decided by the fact that there are two prophecies in the book which no hypothesis of its late origin can at all account for: these are the prophecies of the fifth empire and that of the seventy weeks. If there is any meaning at all in ii. 44, vii. 27, it can only be the promise of a vast and permanent spiritual kingdom, such as that which claims to have been founded by Christ. It is, humanly speaking, as unlikely that this should have been foreseen in the second century as in the sixth before Christ; and still more unlikely is it that a

person writing in the second century before Christ the kind of imaginary fiction this book would have been, should have framed so lofty a conception as this, and have put it into the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar, and have asserted it so confidently.

And the same may be said of the prophecy of the seventy weeks. This is absolutely unintelligible on the supposition of its late origin; whereas if it is part, as it professes to be, of a divine vision, it is not only susceptible of a marvellously minute interpretation, but seems to have furnished the only conceivable basis upon which our Lord declared, when He commenced His ministry, that the time was fulfilled; for in the whole compass of Scripture there is nothing to show that the Messianic hopes and promises were to be fulfilled in the age of Christ—who claimed to have fulfilled them—more than at any other time, and yet we have independent evidence that, at that time, there was a very general impression that they were then to be fulfilled.

It is for these reasons, then, that we regard the Book of Daniel as a genuine work of the age of Daniel, and as coming to us with his authority and sanction. And as such it sets the coping-stone to the edifice of the sacred Scriptures, as a monument of divine revelation; for though in Psalm and Prophecy we have many indications of a presiding divine mind, as we have in sacred history of a divine providence, yet nowhere, as in the Book of Daniel, have we the definite and bold assertion of a claim to declare beforehand the events of the hidden future—the distinct and unfaltering challenge on the part of the historian to have triumphed over the ordinary laws of nature; to have “stopped the mouths of lions and quenched the violence of fire.”

HOSEA.

1. *Position in the Canon.*—The first place in the collection of shorter prophecies, commonly called The Minor Prophets, is assigned to Hosea both in the Hebrew and in the Greek canon. The cause of this arrangement may have been the occurrence in i. 2 of the phrase, “The beginning of the word of the Lord.” Or it may have been the character of the work as the one great prophetic production of the northern kingdom. Possibly there was no more abstruse reason than that it was the longest of the earlier books in the group. The very earliest it could hardly be, for putting aside the claims of Jonah and Joel, which are open to question, we have only to compare the contents of Amos to perceive that the period mirrored in it is antecedent to that pictured in the pages of Hosea. These two prophets were indeed closely related, and the work of the one throws light on that of the other. As Elijah and Elisha stand out against the dark background of the downfall of the dynasty of Omri, in like manner Amos and Hosea presage the overthrow of the royal house of Jehu and the destruction of the kingdom of Ephraim, and at once interpret the purpose of Jehovah and vindicate His character in the final catastrophe.

2. *Career of the Prophet.*—Of the prophet’s person and career we know little, for he is not mentioned in the historical books of the Bible, and not much can be gathered from his own writing. His name is identical with that of the last king of Samaria (2 Kings xv. 30), and also with the earlier name of Israel’s great leader in the conquest of Canaan (Numbers xiii. 16). His father Beeri has been mistakenly identified with Beerah (1 Chron. v. 6), and gratuitously credited with the authorship of Isaiah viii. 19, 20. There are other traditional statements concerning our prophet, but they contradict one another, and have no authority.

Enough may be gathered from the style and spirit of Hosea’s book to construct a vivid and very individualistic portrait of the man and of the seer. If an interpretation of chapters i.—iii.

which of late years has gained the support of the highest scholarship and the finest critical discernment of our time may be accepted, then we have the veil drawn aside from a pathetic story of domestic trial, that discloses the origin of what is deepest and most original in the message of the prophet, and gives us the key to his peculiar place in the orderly progress of revelation.

A difficult reference in ix. 7, 8, suggests that, as might have been surely inferred, Hosea was exposed to the most maddening opposition and obduracy, if not also to treacherous and perilous attack. The same passage, in combination with the denunciations of priest and prophet (iv. 4, 5, &c.), seems to point to the official religious orders as the standing antagonists of the prophet and of his doctrine. It is commonly assumed that he was a layman, and like Amos no member of a prophetic guild, but called by a personal divine impulse to his public work. This is probably correct, though it has been urged with some ingenuity that the prominence given to the priesthood in his utterances, his interest in worship, his knowledge of ritual, law, and history, mark him out as himself a member of the priestly caste, and thus explain the allusion to "hatred in the house of his God" (ix. 8).

The idea which used to prevail in certain quarters, that, though his mission was mainly to the northern nation, the man was himself a citizen of the southern kingdom, has been practically abandoned. It remains possible, and to some extent his references to Judah support the notion, that towards the end of his career he was driven by persecution to forsake Ephraim, and to take up his abode in Judæa, where he put together the record of his prophetic activity. That he was beyond all question by birth, breeding, life, and sympathy a native of the north is evidenced by his intimate and easy familiarity with its geography, recent history, social condition, and minute local circumstances and characteristics. There is, indeed, in the testimony of the Judæan Amos a wonderful accuracy and detail of acquaintance with the northern realm. But it is not equal to that of Hosea, and there is a difference of kind. The one knows about the affairs of Ephraim. The other is at home in its life, bound up in its sorrows, sins, and ruin, personally burdened with its guilt, agonising in its death-throes, and in every note of its funeral dirge feeling its fate as his own.

3. *Date and Contemporary Events.*—There is a twofold indication of date prefixed to the Book of Hosea. First, it is stated, in terms of the Judæan monarchy, that the word of the Lord came to him "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." Second, in terms of the northern mon-

archy, it is said to have been "in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel," that is of course Jeroboam II., the greatest and most statesmanlike of Israel's kings. These are manifestly distinct headings, and not parallel designations of the same period. For it is certain that Jeroboam was dead some years before the end of Uzziah's reign, and while the reference to the northern monarch terminates about the middle of the eighth century, the Judæan date carries us down to its close.

The chronology of the age is extremely uncertain, and even with the aid of the Assyrian inscriptions scholars have succeeded in fixing no more than a few events in it with precision. What the double date of the superscription does enable us to say with approximate certainty is, that Hosea's earliest prophecies fell in the closing years of Jeroboam, and therefore in all likelihood before B.C. 750. As for the rest, the lengthy list of Judæan kings does not necessarily imply that there are in the book oracles belonging to each and all of these reigns. The heading is a large and general one, indicating the prophet's epoch. Probably it was a technical designation of that splendid age of prophetic activity which corresponded with the slow and momentous advance of the Assyrian power. It is noteworthy that we find it attached to the Book of Isaiah, which heads the series of the prophets proper in the Old Testament canon, and with the omission of Uzziah it also introduces the work of his younger contemporary, Micah. In the case of Hosea its scope is plainly limited by the fall of Samaria, which took place about the commencement of Hezekiah's reign.

We may, therefore, roughly locate the activity of Hosea in the two middle quarters of the eighth century. In this period the first half formed a striking contrast to the last. Through the prowess and ability of Jeroboam, taking advantage of Assyria's persistent pressure on Syria, the ancient enemy of Samaria, Israel had recovered much of its former importance, and was enjoying great prosperity. This good fortune was of course fallacious, for Assyria's conquest of Damascus meant the clearance of its way to Samaria and the rich coast towns and provinces of Palestine. Moreover, wealth and success had not bettered the moral and spiritual condition of Ephraim, but rather were breeding in the commonwealth a host of lawless ambitions, evil passions, and demoralising forces, such as have so often caused a strong military despotism to be followed by anarchy and sudden decay. It was so in Israel. With the death of Jeroboam, his empire was rent and wasted by the struggles of military adventurers, the conspiracies of rival factions, and the hatreds of inter-necine feuds, complicated by foreign intrigues with the great

rival empires of Egypt and Assyria. His son Zechariah, after a brief reign of six months, was dethroned and slain by Shallum, who within a month was massacred by Menahem. With the aid of Assyria Menahem held the throne for some years, but his son Pekahiah in two years was murdered by Pekah, and he in turn was slain by Hoshea, the last king of Samaria. The period was one of frightful violence and confusion; all ties of social life were loosened; immorality, irreligion, superstition, panic, and despair contributed to the common misery and ruin; it hardly needed prophetic insight to foresee the inevitable end in the total dissolution of the state.

Corresponding to this change of character in the national condition and fortunes, there is a sharply defined distinction between the opening chapters (i.—iii.) of Hosea and the remainder (iv.—xiv.) of the book. The first part belongs to the earlier period of prosperity, for it pictures national plenty and rejoicing (ii. 5, 8, 13), and only threatens famine and disaster. The people are accused of infidelity to Jehovah and of attendant immorality, but not of such moral disintegration as marked later times. Moreover, the throne is still occupied by the dynasty of Jehu (i. 4).

With equal decisiveness we have in the second part the atmosphere of the dark and distracted age that followed the decease of Jeroboam (iv. 1, 2; v. 1, 2, 13; vii. 7, 11, &c.). Everywhere we are confronted with the lawlessness, the dissoluteness, the plotting factions, the mad dallying with the great powers, and a thousand unmistakable indications of the last years of Israel's decline and decay. But, while there can be no hesitation in assigning the whole of this section to the period in question, it is almost a hopeless task to divide it into separate utterances, and to attach these to particular stages of the downward career of the kingdom. This difficulty is due partly to the peculiar style adopted by the prophet, whose utterances flow on in one long, impassioned monologue, in which we rather dimly divine pauses than clearly discern them. Moreover, the references to contemporary incidents and current circumstances, though numerous and detailed, are too vague to help us much in our extreme ignorance of the actual course of events, which are chronicled in the most summary fashion in the historical books.

The following identifications have been proposed, but are none of them proved. The phrase, "Now shall a mouth devour them" (v. 7) refers to Shallum; "All their kings are fallen" (vii. 7) to Menahem, as also viii. 4 and 9—10, on account of his relations with Assyria (2 Kings xv. 19); while the mention of Shalman (x. 14) is held to indicate the reign of Hoshea. This last would

be very important, if we could be certain that Shalmaneser IV. is meant, but it might equally well be Shalmaneser III., or a King Salamanu of Moab, whose name occurs in an inscription of Tiglath-Pileser. Moreover, did the book cover so late a period, should we not find some trace in it of the remarkable movement which so stirred Isaiah, when Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria attacked Judæa, and tempted Ahaz to call in the aid of Assyria? Would the references in v. 1, vi. 8, xii. 11, be possible, after the devastation of Gilead and Naphtali by Tiglath-Pileser, which was the consequence? On the contrary, throughout the book Assyria appears not as a cruel destroyer (except in prediction of the future), but rather as a formidable power, whose alliance is foolishly courted by selfish factions in Israel. As this attitude is maintained even to the end (xiv. 3), it is urged with much probability, that the period actually reflected in Hosea's utterances does not extend much or at all beyond the times of Menahem.

4. *The Basis of the Prophet's Teaching.*—The characteristic feature of Hosea's book is his representation of his relation between God and the chosen people in terms of the marriage tie. Jehovah is the nation's husband, and Israel His unfaithful spouse. The choice of the figure is remarkable, and still more startling the use that is made of it. The idea of a conjugal union between a god and the land or people belonging to him was, indeed, a commonplace of Semitic religions. And it had its natural sequel in the encouragement of gross sexual abuses as a regular accompaniment of the established worship. The very evil that was blighting Ephraim in Hosea's age was the introduction of this physical conception, with its vile abuses, into the cult of Jehovah. Yet it is precisely this notion that the prophet takes and makes the basis of his entire polemic against the prevalent ills of the time, and the keynote of his teaching concerning God and His purposes with His people.

How came Hosea to a thought of such bold and original creativeness? He tells us that it grew out of a personal experience of a very remarkable character. By Divine direction he formed relations either of marriage or concubinage with one or possibly two women of dissolute life, had children, assigned to these significant names, and was taught thus to discern the meaning and drift of Jehovah's ways with His faithless people.

Taken in this bare and probably inexact reading, the story is so repulsive that a majority of interpreters have always refused to count it an actual transaction, and have relegated it to the category of symbolical action, allegory, or objective vision—whatever that may mean. But what would be foul in fact does

not become clean in symbol, vision, or fancy, and so in neither case would the supposed transaction have been possessed of much edifying efficacy. Moreover, if acted in dumb show, or simply told as a parable, it would not have had any specially impressive power on the minds of spectators or hearers, while as an actual experience in the prophet's home, its movement would be too slow and its scenes too removed from public view to tell on the conscience of the community.

Evidently its purpose was not the instruction of the people, but the making of the prophet. What the painful tragedy could accomplish as nothing else could, was to penetrate the prophet's own life, and thought, and spirit, with an analogical but intensely vivid realisation of the heart and mind of God in His dealing with wayward Israel. And for that, we cannot but conclude, it must have been an experience actually lived through—not, however, in relations of baseness, but necessarily in a sphere of pure and honourable love, hope, and aspiration. That it was an actual episode in the prophet's fortunes is confirmed by the fact that while the children's names are manifestly symbolical, the wife's name is as certainly real and not imaginative.

While we have but to bring to the story an intelligent knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of Hebrew narration and the methods of Divine revelation to get rid of a number of unhappy assumptions, and to find, in place of a history that, whether allegory or actuality, was alike repellent and spiritless, a pure and pathetic tale of suffering and loyal love, which might well make a high-tuned heart sensitive to the Divine tenderness, and stir a brave-souled patriot to the career of a prophet.

Hosea was a citizen of northern Israel, in whom burned the zeal of Elijah for Jehovah. The persistent sinning of his people pained him and perplexed him with questions concerning God and providence in the past, present, and future. At last light broke on him from a strange quarter, and yet certainly from heaven. It was "the beginning of God's word" to him, and through him to Israel. By Divine guidance, under the impulse of a warm attachment, he married, counting on a pure and happy domestic life. But his wife, contaminated by the religious taint of the time, proved unfaithful. He forbore with her, and hoped for amendment. Children were born and, by Divine direction, called by names significant of Israel's disloyalty to her God.

The truth was penetrating Hosea's whole being, that in him and his faithless spouse God was exhibiting types of Himself and wayward Israel. At length, by Hosea's act or her own, the unhappy wife ceased to be an inmate of his home, a partaker of

his care and shelter. She fell into a condition of slavery and misery. The old love was not gone from Hosea's heart. The thing was almost beyond the humanly possible, but a voice within him said, "Go, love her still, and by firm and tender handling win her back to purity."

It was the voice of God. Nay, it was the spirit of Jehovah in Hosea reproducing the feeling, thought, and action of God in His treatment of Israel. The prophet's first ardent attachment, his pain and grief under his wrongs, his loathing of the sin, his jealous indignation, his relenting, and patience, and forbearance, the loving sternness of discipline, the clinging affection that followed the unhappy outcast, the compassion for her in her degradation, the more than human loyalty of love and strength of goodness that recovered and redeemed her—these emotions, and conflicts, and experiences in Hosea are echoes and expressions of the very heart of God. This is the secret of Jehovah and of His providential leading of His people.

5. *Conception of Jehovah.*—Armed with this understanding of Hosea's ruling thought, we have a clue, if not to the logical order of the somewhat intricate maze of his monologue, at least to its emotional unity and its spiritual contents. Jehovah is a being, not of mere natural energies and physical bountifulness, but He is a God of moral forces, of justice, truth, and love. Fellowship with Him must live and move in these attributes, or it cannot be at all. A social order that is unrighteous, a religious worship that is immoral, a national existence based on earthly guarantees, may call themselves by Jehovah's name, but in truth they are a deflection from His fellowship, a defiance of His authority, and an outrage on His love. The local Baals, at whose shrines Israel sacrifices and feasts, with practices and beliefs contaminated by Canaanitish paganism and impurity; the gold-plated calves, that are adored as the embodiment of Israel's god, till the worshippers have forgotten that He is moral and not material; these are not Israel's true Divine husband, but usurpers of His place and of His rights. They are in fact and in practice other gods, and indeed no gods at all, while their cult is a profanation and an infidelity perpetrated in the face of the living God.

A twin act of desertion and unfaithfulness is the separate national existence of the northern kingdom, perpetuating as it does an ill-omened schism cleft in the unity of Jehovah's chosen people, and cursed by the instability of government, the lawlessness and violence, and the lack of moral and religious stamina which are the inevitable weaknesses of a community founded on revolt, held together by material interests only, and not rooted

in a sure and clearly discerned purpose of providence. An aggravation of this fundamental falseness, and a consequence of it, is Israel's ambition to mingle with the nations, to covet wealth and military might, and to seek support in its extremity from the great world powers rather than from its God.

The immediate harvest of its disloyalty to Jehovah is a universal relaxation of morality, the decay of all truth, and mercy, and purity, a creeping canker of selfishness and heartlessness, and the steady disintegration of all those virtues that make the happiness and strength of a nation. Hope of immediate amendment Hosea has none. The religious guides, the prophets and priests, the national leaders, the judges and rulers, are all involved in the universal corruption—are, indeed, its source. There is no knowledge of God in the land. Nevertheless, God's love of His people cannot be defeated, though its kindness may be thwarted and delayed. By calamity, famine, conquest, and exile He will prove to them the impotence of their false gods and allies. In their loneliness and misery He will speak to them, wake old memories in their breast, stir their souls to more spiritual desires, woo them back to their former love, and wed them to Himself again “in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.” They shall abjure their idols, and carnal worship, and earthly trusts, and secular ambitions (xiv. 2, 3). They shall “seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.”

6. *Style*.—Hosea is the Cassandra of the northern kingdom. He pours out his lamentations over prevalent evils rather to unburden a surcharged grief than with any hope of mending them. He proclaims the approach of doom with no thought of averting it, and it is as it were only from the necessity of his own soul to seek escape from the overpowering gloom of the surrounding darkness, that after a long dirge of woes he suddenly breaks away, and expatiates on the light of the Divine restoration that must dawn when the night of sorrows is done. His style is fresh, poetical, nervous, but often enigmatical and difficult, rather from a superabundance of thought and meaning than from poverty of expression or obscurity of conception. His language is tumultuous with emotion, teeming with images that crowd one another uncompleted onwards, swinging to and fro between the opposite poles of anger and compassion, upbraiding and appeal, disdaining constantly the elaborate exposition of logic, and fusing its links of argument in the impassioned utterance of the heart.

In like manner, while his teaching marks a decisive advance

in defining and securing the contents of the true religion of Jehovah, his theology is a theology of the heart more than of the head. His expression of the tie between God and Israel in the imagery of the noblest human love, that has in its heart all justice, and purity, and truth, emancipates for ever the conception of religion from all elements that are not moral and spiritual, and flings about it and its subject the glow and warmth of ethical life and love. The conceptions of his predecessor, Amos, may indeed have more breadth, but they lack the depth and intensity of Hosea's realisation of God's heart in relation to His people. It is the spirit of Hosea's emotional piety that is echoed in much of the finest of later prophecy, and that breathes in the devotional grandeur of the Psalms. And in the New Testament, besides the numerous direct quotations of his words (Matt. ii. 15; ix. 13; xii. 7, &c.), the central thought of Hosea is taken up by our Lord Himself, and becomes the chosen image of the union of fidelity, and sacrifice, and undying love between Himself and His mystic bride, the Church.

JOEL.

1. *Character and Author.*—The arrangement of the minor prophets in the Hebrew Canon, and in the earliest of the versions, the Greek Septuagint, is the same for the last six, but differs considerably in respect of the earlier ones. The respective orders are as follows:—

HEBREW.—Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah.

SEPTUAGINT.—Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah.

It is evident that in both the relative position of Hosea, Amos, Micah is identical, while the discrepancy arises in connection with the points where Joel, Obadiah, Jonah are introduced. These three books lack any indication of date in their superscriptions, and apparently at an early period canonical editors, thrown back on internal evidence, arrived at diverse conclusions. It is even probable that, while the great groups of the collection are placed chronologically (*i.e.* Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian), the position of individual books has been determined by considerations of a more literary character, such as affinities of thought, theme, or even phraseology. Therefore the canonical rank of Joel does no more than tell us that he was reckoned to belong to the early period of prophecy.

The title of the book adds little to our information. The prophet's name means *Jehovah is God*. He was the son of Pethuel, but of his birthplace and condition in life we are told nothing. That he prophesied, wrote, and published his memoir in Jerusalem seems certain (ii. 15—17, &c.). From the prominence which the Temple and its functionaries and ritual have in his oracle it has been conjectured that he belonged to the priestly order. The guess is neither proved nor disproved by the manner of his references to the priests (i. 9, 13; ii. 17). As to the time when he lived and worked there is no definite statement either in the title or in the body of the book. The date must be purely a matter of inference from its general character and contents.

2. *Scope of the Prophecy.*—The situation pictured in the prophecy is the following. The land has been devastated by successive swarms of locusts. A still more terrible visitation is impending. In the intervening pause the prophet appears. With graphic strokes he depicts the bygone disasters, describing them as Divine judgments on the land, and urging the people to repentance (i.). He proceeds to paint in still darker tints the more awful vengeance of Heaven that is approaching, and passes over into an overpowering appeal for penitence and instant prayer to God for mercy (ii. 1—17). This first intervention having proved successful, the prophet presents himself to the contrite congregation, and pours forth a comforting reassurance of God's present pity and future grace (ii. 18—32), and concludes with a majestic picture of the consummation of judgment and triumphant establishment of God's kingdom on earth (iii.).

Of these main divisions the first falls into five sub-sections—an introduction, three special appeals, and the conclusion. A calamity of unprecedented magnitude has befallen the land. Swarm after swarm of locusts have stripped it bare (i. 2—4). The profligate and luxurious are struck by the blow, for the new wine and other means of indulgence are destroyed (i. 5—7). The religious portion of the community is also stricken, for the materials for sacrifice are cut off, and, as it were, intercourse with Heaven is severed (i. 8—10). The agricultural classes and the whole body politic are concerned, for the sources of existence are annihilated, and the withered aspect of the blasted fields spreads to men's faces, and joy is banished from their homes (i. 11, 12). It is time for the priests to unite the people in a penitential fast and universal prayer for mercy, when already famine gnaws, the seed rots in the blighted soil, pastures and streams are dried up by scorching drought, and the beasts by their distracted movements and cries of agony make appeal to Heaven for compassion (i. 13—20).

The second division describes a new invasion of locusts, more terrible in itself and in its circumstances, because more manifestly accompanied by the personal presence of the Divine Judge. The utterance falls into five sections, of which the opening one dramatically delineates the first appearance in the distance of the dreaded scourge (ii. 1—3); the second, the sickening horror of their nearer approach (ii. 4—6); the third, their resistless onset and men's presaging despair (ii. 7—11); the fourth furnishes a promise of escape to sincere repentance (ii. 12—14), and the fifth completes the continuous summons to national contrition and supplication (ii. 15—17).

The third division, opening with a terse historical statement, tacitly assuming that penitence has been done, and declaring God's forgiveness, proceeds to unroll a new chart of the future. The prophet had foretold the approaching doom of impenitent Israel. He must now unfold the changed character of coming events in view of the great fact of a penitent Israel. The main elements of the programme are depicted in five sections. With repentance and restoration to Divine favour Israel's relation to the great elements of God's government is entirely altered. The impending judgment is withdrawn. Their present distress is relieved and passes into plenty and prosperity. In this deliverance the supreme effect of gladness is the assurance of God's presence with them and His unchanged purpose of grace and glory in them (ii. 18—27). Therefore the prophecy must proceed. Temporal relief is not enough. Israel is destined for more than physical prosperity. The world's consummation is drawing on. To play their part in the grand fulfilment of history, Israel must have a holiness beyond that of the present reformation. The nation must become the perfect instrument of God, inhabited by His character, inspired by His aims, entirely consecrated to His service.

Such a new nature must be created, not by Israel's own act, but by a Divine deed, by a gift from above. The nation must be inspired by God's Spirit in every individual member. Then will the end of all things be near. With Israel's complete fitness to the Divine purpose the consummation of the world's drama must speedily follow. The outpouring of the Spirit is the precursor of judgment. The day of the Lord comes—a day of dread to evil-doers, but of deliverance to all who call on God's name, and whom God calls (ii. 28—32). The final act of judgment has, therefore, no menace any longer for God's people, but directs its violence against the heathen nations, who, persistently impenitent, have remained hostile to Jehovah and His people (iii. 1—8). With weird colours and terrible dramatic power the destruction of the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat (*Jehovah judgeth*) is depicted (iii. 9—17). And the prophecy concludes with a glowing picture of the happy repose of finished judgment and mercy, in which all God's enemies are seen to be vanquished, and Israel, prosperous and conferring prosperity, is established for ever and ever (iii. 18—21).

3. *Differences of Interpretation.*—Several points in the interpretation of the book furnish matter for dispute, and, according as they are decided, materially affect our conception of the prophecy. Contrary to the line taken in the preceding sketch, it is

held that the seer is throughout describing future calamities, and not disasters already begun. The theory is possible, but improbable, in the face of such expressions as occur in i. 2, 16—20, and the warm personal and presential feeling breathed into the recital (i. 13; ii. 15—17). Again, the prophecy is sometimes construed as one continuous utterance without change of circumstance, and the verbs in ii. 18 are translated not as pasts describing an occurrence, but as futures enunciating a principle of Divine dealing, or expressing a desire that God may so deal with the supplicants. The rendering is grammatically possible, but, reducing as it does the whole second part of the book from a direct Divine declaration to a mere human wish or inference, it involves an artistic blunder hardly conceivable in a writer of such literary skill, and a construction practically impossible in a prophecy.

Another question concerns the locusts. They are taken literally, and the occasion of the oracle is assumed to have been some terrible period of famine produced by this scourge and aggravated by drought and heat. Another view holds them to be, either in chapter ii. or in both chapters i. and ii., an allegorical piece of imagery, used to portray the devastation of definite invading armies. A third theory counts them to be an apocalyptic device, employed without regard to actual historical events, but with the vague reference and eschatological futurity of the locusts described in Revelation ix. This last notion has little to commend it, and is already discounted if the allegorical view fails to hold its ground. The natural impression of an unbiased reader is certainly that the locusts are locusts. The burden of proof or disproof, therefore, rests on the second theory.

It is argued that things are ascribed to the locusts proper only to human beings and responsible agents, or contrary to the habits, or beyond the powers of locusts, and that generally the intensity of the feeling and the sombreness of the representation are out of all proportion to a mere plague of locusts. But the calamity is a famine, gaunt, deadly, and inexorable, such as a prolonged plague of locusts might readily produce in a small and mainly agricultural country, as was Judæa when the prophet wrote, while the incompatibilities and exaggerations alleged either exist only in the objectors' fancy or are finely felt strokes of imaginative delineation on the part of the prophetic author.

On the other hand, if the locusts are merely symbols for an invading army, then in chapter ii. we have the symbolic locusts

compared back again with their original, *i.e.* an army, horsemen, warriors, &c. ; and in the detail of this illustration we have inserted features certainly discordant with the assumed original (ii. 5, 9, &c.). Again, if the locusts are mere imagery, the minuteness of their portraiture (ii. 1--9), the elaboration of their depredations (i. 1--20), and the exquisite art spent on these delineations must be counted a blunder as monstrous as if a builder were to expend all his carving, gilding, and decoration on the scaffolding instead of on the edifice itself. While what has been called exaggeration of feeling would be equally out of proportion to any invasion, and is so precisely because it is created and justified by the prophetic sense of a more awful presence in the physical calamity ; to wit, the approach of *the day of the Lord*, the consummation of all things.

One thing remains to some extent a difficulty in the way of the literal rendering. The prophet describes the cause of the calamity as *the northern army* (ii. 20), a designation unlikely for locusts, which usually come from the south, and in view of references in Ezekiel (xxxviii.—ix.) naturally suggesting the dreaded northern invaders, or more simply the Assyrians. This is not, however, conclusive ; the word is capable of other renderings ; the verse is besides peculiar, and may be a marginal comment ; and in any case this one point cannot outweigh the powerful impression of literal intention made by the whole fashion in which the locusts are handled in the prophecy.

That the second half of the book deals with Israel's relations to the heathen people is no stumbling-block, because its theme is that day of the Lord, of which the plagues in the first half were the precursors, and whose lightnings diverted from penitent Israel now strike the nations. That the end of all things should be conceived in such close, even organic, connection with a physical calamity is no more difficult than if the disaster were of a military nature, and is a universal characteristic of prophetic representation, which always portrays God's punitive energy and gracious activity massively, ideally, and in their finality.

The tide of modern scholarly opinion sets in favour of the literal interpretation. If, however, that should be discarded, the alternative would be, not a reference to the Assyrians, or any actual single invader, but we should see in the book a broad post-Exilic survey of Israel's bygone desolations, and a passionate expectation of ultimate vengeance and requital.

4. *Joel's Place in History*.—The difficulty of fixing the place of Joel in history by internal evidence, which is our sole resource,

appears sufficiently in the fact that dates have been assigned him ranging over five centuries. Practically the question at present lies between two, viz., the beginning of the reign of Joash (say b.c. 860) or in the post-Exilic period about the time of Nehemiah (say b.c. 445). The earlier has in its favour the position of our book in the canon, and may therefore claim to be in possession. It supports and defines its presumptions by a positive construction of the historical references of the prophecy. Joel, it is said, knows Jehoshaphat's triumph (iii. 2; 2 Chron. xx.), Edom's revolt (iii. 19; 2 Kings viii. 20), and the Philistine invasion under Jehoram (iii. 4; 2 Chron. xxi. 16), while he does not know the Assyrian troubles, nor Amaziah's revenge on Edom (2 Kings xiv. 7), nor the Syrian attempt on Jerusalem in the close of Joash's reign (2 Kings xii. 18). He must, therefore, be later than b.c. 885 and earlier than b.c. 840. Within this period the picture of the internal condition of the community excludes the years of Ahaziah and Athalia, and also the later evil years of Joash, while it answers exactly to the period of Joash's minority under the regency of the high priest Jehoiada, say about b.c. 865.

Against this combination the defenders of the post-Exilic date urge that the historical argument is arbitrary, and that the internal features that tell for Joash's minority tell more strongly for Nehemiah's age, while certain larger considerations seem expressly to exclude any early date. The issue is fine and complicated. It is impossible to do more than marshal the evidence and indicate its general bearing. The historical combinations already cited tell strongly for the early date, if Joel has particular hostilities in view beyond mere border quarrels and slave-stealing and dealing. But the weight is diminished by the regularity with which the nations named appear as Israel's enemies, in prophetic denunciations, both before and after the Exile. The trade in slaves to the Levant (iii. 6) and to South Arabia (iii. 8), which was always carried on through the Philistine and Phœnician seaports and the Edomite and Arabian caravans, furnishes no clue from the balanced character of Joel's references.

The strange silence—assuming ii. 20 to refer to locusts—concerning Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, suggests that Joel wrote before or after the era of those great world powers. Perhaps the last, though unmentioned, might have been existent, since it did not rank with the first two in point of injury and hatred. Against the time of Nehemiah is the absence of Samaritans, Moabites, and Ammonites in the list of the foes of Jerusalem. But still more adverse to the pre-Exilic date is the extraordinary

disappearance—as compared with the practice of the other early prophets—of Northern Israel from the prophet's picture of the present and his forecast of the future.

Much is made of the representation of the internal condition of Judah. The entire people is summoned to the fast by blast of trumpet; a locust plague means annihilation; agriculture is the sole resource, therefore, of a small, narrowly circumscribed, and impoverished population. Freeing this statement from prosaic wilfulness, and remembering how small a territory at all times was Judæa, and how reduced was the nation in Joash's time, we cannot allow it much influence on behalf of the later date. If the dispersion and disintegration of territory contemplated in iii. 1—2 are presented as already fully realised, then, spite of such passages as Hosea vi. 11, Amos ix. 14, it is a strong argument for the post-Exilic time. But the prophetic oratorical style mitigates greatly its conclusiveness. The internal organization of the community is held to be purely municipal under priests and elders, while there are no king, princes, statesmen, or warriors. But against the failure to mention the king might be put the failure to mention the post-Exilic high priest. Moreover the community is not explicitly represented as under the government of priests and elders. Only the priests are officially summoned to inaugurate the fast (i. 14). The elders are simply a class picked out for special mention among those to be convened, and probably the word should be rendered *old men* as in i. 2; ii. 16. Moreover, the priestly regency of Joash's minority is not incompatible with the predominance of the priests in Joel's appeal.

More important by far, though difficult of objective valuation, are such considerations as the authoritative bearing of the prophet; the conscious absence of prophetic rivalry and opposition, his harmonious relations with the priesthood, the weight and prominence attached by him to the ceremonial of religion, the central place assigned to sacrifice, and particularly to the meat and drink offerings, the seeming non-existence of high places or idolatry, the absence of polemic against the great national sins that bulk so largely in the pages of other prophets prior to the Exile; and finally the alleged physical, non-political, and generally circumscribed sphere of his prophetic survey and activity. Whether the primary powerful impression of these arguments maintains itself after allowance has been made for disproportionate statement, *a priori* assumptions, the possibilities of Jehoiada's rule, and above all the personal idiosyncrasy of the prophet, is a question that will not be answered with any

approach to unanimity, till scholars are more agreed as to the general course of Israel's history, and the principles that must determine our interpretation of prophecy.

Lines of reasoning are led of a still more doctrinaire description, turning on the prophet's religious conceptions, but their value is merely psychological. One method of investigation remains to be mentioned, viz., the literary relations of Joel to other books of the Old Testament. Ideas and phrases of this book recur from Amos onward along the whole line of prophetic writers. In regard to Amos especially a very plausible case has been made out for Joel's priority, but it is met by strong denial. Perhaps the one sure inference is that Joel is either the first or the last in the prophetic succession. He is either the original prophetic quarry or the latest conglomerate. Looking at his indubitable artistic genius, the second half of the alternatives jars on one's critical instinct. Meantime the question of the book's date remains open, and will hardly be closed except as part of the general settlement of the great controversy concerning the history of Israel.

5. *Style*.—As might be inferred from what has been already said, the style and thought of Joel are strikingly characteristic, notwithstanding numerous assonances of detail with other prophets. In the first half we are under the spell of a descriptive poet or word painter, but the prophetic orator asserts himself in the second half. Language and structure are pure, flowing, and artistic, but the literary excellence is not an argument for either date, but rather a difficulty in the way of his being either the first or the last of the prophetic authors. Personal traits appear in the detailed delineation of the physical aspects of the disaster, in the contrasting vagueness as to the sins that caused it, and in the predominant and all-possessing engrossment of the seer in the grand conception of the day of the Lord. These mental qualities of the writer may account for certain features in his work that are put forward as proof of post-Exilic times.

The limitation of the prophet's religious range and the particularism of his aspirations have been exaggerated. He emphasises the ritual of penitence, doubtless, but he declares it worthless save as the expression of reality (ii. 13). Earthly well-being bulks largely, but as the prelude, promise, and platform of spiritual attainment, privilege, and service (ii. 28; iii. 18). The outpouring of the Spirit is probably confined to Israel, yet salvation depends not on Jewish birth but on spiritual citizenship in God's kingdom (ii. 32). The Messianic future is built on existing conditions and relations, has its home on Zion,

destroys, not converts the heathen, lacks the figure of a personal Messiah, is disappointingly physical in its garb, and comes short of the ethical and spiritual elevation of the pictures of the great prophets. But the fact remains unaltered, that the prophecy is rooted in an absolute faith in the eternal principles of God's government of the world, that its living theme and interest is the march through history of Divine grace and judgment, that it wakes echoes in the thought and apocalyptic expectations of the New Testament, and in its conception of the triumph of God's kingdom as the direct fruit of the plenary gift of God's Spirit has anticipated the wonder of Pentecost, and presaged the inner secret and source of all that is holy and divine in the progress of Christendom.

AMOS.

1. *Place in the Canon.*—In the Hebrew canon of the minor prophets Amos stands third; but in the Septuagint he is placed second. He must not be identified with Am^{oz}, the father of Isaiah, as some of the Greek fathers fancied, for though the names are spelt the same in Greek, they are quite different in Hebrew, and the distinction is sufficiently, though incompletely, marked in our own version. Our knowledge of the man is derived solely from personal references in his book. Nowhere else in the Old Testament is any biographical allusion made to him. Fortunately there is in his prophecy detail enough to furnish a definite and interesting conception of his character and career.

2. *History of the Prophet.*—The prophet was by birth and residence a citizen of Judæa. He belonged to the district of Tekoa, a small town some twelve miles south of Jerusalem, perched on a high hill, looking away eastwards across a waste of barren hills to the Dead Sea peeping through their interstices, and the lofty tableland of Moab bounding the horizon beyond. It stands on the edge of the desert, where the fringes of agriculture thin away into a wilderness of rock and sand, broken only by scattered patches of scanty pasturage. The town can never have been much more than a prosperous village; but the adjacent soil is fruitful and kindly, and its oil and honey became celebrated for their excellence. For strategic purposes it was fortified by Rehoboam, and it had the advantage of lying in a region intersected by some of the busiest highways of commerce. Its inhabitants might see much and hear more, and, in connection with trading caravans, be drawn into travel and become acquainted with the world and its doings. The place was thus in several ways not unsuitable for the training of a prophet, and it is arbitrary to argue, as two or three scholars have recently done, because there is now no sycamore culture in the district, and because Amos possesses an intimate knowledge of the north, that therefore we must look for another Tekoa somewhere in Samaria.

There is more room for reasonable difference of opinion in determining the prophet's precise condition in life. In the supercription of his book he is described as "one of the herdmen of Tekoa" (i. 1). But the word *nogedh*, translated herdman, may mean either one who tends flocks or one who breeds and owns them, in which sense it is used of the king of Moab (2 Kings iii. 4). Again, the designation, "a dresser of sycamore-trees" (vii. 14), leaves it uncertain whether he was a proprietor of sycamore plantations, or whether, as a shepherd hireling, he eked out meagre rations by gathering wild sycamore figs, the coarsest fruit of Palestine, and eaten chiefly by the poorer classes. It is generally held that the balance of probability is turned in favour of the second opinion, by the prophet's declaration that the Lord took him "from following the flock" (vii. 15). But the active pursuit of the pastoral calling is not inconsistent with ownership, or at least sonship to the owner (compare 1 Sam. xvi. 11), and the idea of the prophetic office with its necessity of absolute and instant disposal at the Divine bidding seems to require, not, indeed, a man of wealth (as the Jewish rabbis would have it), but certainly a man who was his own master in the full sense of the word. Nothing positive can be deduced from the degree of culture manifested in the book.

Spite of a floating tradition to the contrary, which still survives in popular circles, we shall see later on that the literary merits of the production must be rated very high. The general information of the writer is comprehensive and minute. He can paint in detail the religious customs, the social conditions, the local circumstances and vicissitudes of every part of the northern kingdom. With the geography and history, the alliances and feuds, trade relations, national institutions, and aspirations of the neighbouring nations, he is thoroughly familiar. He is possessed of profound ideas about nature, providence, the movements of races, and their place and function in the world's government.

For breadth of survey, for strength and massiveness of conception, alike in morals and in religion, he is not surpassed by any of the prophets. He is a poet, an orator, a philosopher, and a statesman. But in those days and in his social environment, he might be all this without being a man of books and cities. Native genius, interest in the traditions of his people, intercourse with passing caravans, personal visits to distant parts, and a spirit awake to the presence and working of God in human history, past, present, and future—these were influences potent enough to educate the man, and admirably adapted to prepare the way for the prophet. And this school was equally open to him, whether he was a poor man, living by his labour, now in

one service, now in another, or a prosperous sheep-master and wealthy owner of fig orchards.

3. *Period of his Public Life.*—The period of his prophetic activity may be fixed, if not with minute precision, at least with broad certainty. It was, the title tells us, and the book (vii. 10) confirms the statement, “in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel” (i. 1), *i.e.* during the closing years of the latter and the early years of the former, when their respective reigns overlapped each other. According to the traditional chronology, that would locate him in the first quarter of the eighth century; by the revised chronology, in the second. No detailed adjustment between the biblical dates and the Assyrian synchronisms, which unfortunately are few and some of them uncertain, has as yet been established. All we can say meantime is, that the prophet’s career fell between B.C. 800 and 750; in all probability nearer the last-mentioned limit.

The circumstantial detail, added in the title, that he prophesied “two years before the earthquake,” excites our hopes only to disappoint them. The reference is unquestionably to an earthquake that occurred in the time of Uzziah, so terrible as to remain a permanent time-mark in the people’s memory; witness the allusion to it in Zechariah xiv. 5, where the prophet says, “Ye shall flee as ye fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah.” All attempts, however, to fix the year of this great calamity have proved unavailing, and probably it was specified in the title of this prophecy for moral and religious motives rather than for chronological purposes.

The book itself is full of special allusions to circumstances affecting Israel, Judah, and the surrounding cities and states, but none lends itself effectively to our inquiry. What is said of Gath, Hamath, Calneh, Edom, is variously interpreted, in order to define more nearly the origin of the prophecy, but our knowledge of contemporary history is too meagre to establish any quite reliable combinations. If the description of the tabernacle of David as “fallen” (ix. 11) is suggested, not by the great national schism, but by the exceptional depression of Judah’s fortunes when Uzziah came to the throne, then we should have a right to place Amos in the section of Jeroboam’s reign coincident with the accession of Uzziah, and prior to the first military successes of that energetic monarch, who so speedily and splendidly retrieved the fortunes of his state.

With this location tallies well the general tenor of the prophet’s references to Judaea, and likewise the picture he paints of the condition of the northern kingdom. It is the portrait of a people

strong and prosperous, free from hostile menace, flushed with recent triumphs, arrogant in their confidence of security, and demoralised on the one hand by the cost, and on the other by the booty, of successful wars. This fits exactly the culmination of Jeroboam's career, when, released from the harassing rivalry of Damascus by the crippling attacks made on that state by Assyria, he seized the opportunity to develop the internal resources and extend the frontiers of his kingdom, till he had re-established Israel's rule from Hamath in the north to the brook of the Arabah in the south. (Compare 2 Kings xiv. 25, with Amos vi. 14.) This, of course, meant wealth and prosperity to the military chiefs and official families, as also to the commercial and monied classes.

But war, whether fortunate or unfortunate, is always a crushing burden to the common people, and especially to the peasantry. Besides the expenditure of blood and treasure, which they have to supply, there is the loss of devastated or neglected harvests, and the heavy taxes and levies made to maintain a large army, a drain on the country that seems to be referred to in the peculiar phrase, "the king's mowings" (vii. 1, compared with 1 Kings xviii. 5, 8, 1 Samuel viii. 14, 15). Apart from actual oppression, the small yeoman holders of the soil get behind, fall into the hands of money-lenders, have to part with their produce at unfair prices, mortgage their ancestral lands, and ultimately lose them, becoming either hired labourers or out-and-out bondsmen. In the towns also property and wealth accumulate in the hands of the upper ranks, while the condition of the poor and dependent classes deteriorates. The usual ethical mischiefs supervene, in luxury and sensuality on the one hand, and on the other discontent and loss of self-respect, to the corruption of public morality and religion, and ultimately the dissolution of society. That is precisely the process of national demoralisation which looks at us out of the pages of Amos. It is the same sad sight that confronts us in the first portion of the prophecy of Hosea, who was either contemporary with or a little later than Amos. In both cases it marks with convincing force the period of these prophetic utterances, and compels us to locate them in the afternoon of Jeroboam's brilliant reign.

4. *The Prophet's Mission.*—Though a citizen of the southern kingdom, Amos was divinely commissioned to work in the northern. Whether he speaks directly of Israel, or more imaginatively of Joseph (v. 6, 15; vi. 6), or Isaac (vii. 9), or uses forms of indirect address, it is always Ephraim that he has in view, Ephraim that he threatens, Ephraim that he appeals to. There is but one or at most two exceptions, when, in vi. 1, he couples

Zion with Samaria, and possibly he may mean to include Judah in the words, "the whole family, which I brought up out of the land of Egypt" (iii. 1). It is not contrary to our assertion that the fiat of judgment proceeds from Zion (i. 2), nor that Judah makes one of the doomed states (ii. 4, 5), with the certainty of whose destruction he preludes the denunciation of Israel, nor that his ideal picture of the restored nation groups itself about the Davidic throne. Hence it is needless to suppose that the introduction of Judaea in these places is an afterthought, not put in execution till the time when the actual utterances against Israel were committed to writing. They fit in quite naturally with their vicinity, and rather throw into relief the fact, that the prophet's field of work was in the north, and his living audience Israel.

It is the common supposition that the whole of these prophecies were delivered in one jet of impassioned utterance and on one single occasion ; that, in fact, the prophet's mission was summed up and exhausted in his appearance at Bethel. There is much to suggest and support this idea, in the peculiar way in which the incident of Amos's collision with the priest Amaziah juts out in the mid-stream of his prophecy, and in the seemingly intentional limitation in the title of his action to a point just two years before the earthquake. But all we may certainly argue from these features is, that the testimony of Amos reached its supreme achievement in the scene at Bethel, while he may have been labouring previously in Ephraim, and indeed afterwards as well ; for it is not said that the prophet was immediately either expelled by force or silenced by motives of personal prudence. The contents and arrangement of his book tend rather to the opposite conclusion. A more prolonged and widely-diffused activity is implied in the intimate acquaintance displayed by the seer with the fortunes and misfortunes of Ephraim ; in the phrases which suggest futile pleadings with them in the past ; in the vivid directness of the appeal to the haughty and heartless ladies of Samaria ; and especially in Amaziah's assertion that Amos had conspired against the king in "the midst of the house of Israel" and that "the land" was not able "to bear all his words" (vii. 10).

It would therefore be improper to maintain dogmatically that the contents of our book were delivered entire to the gay crowd before the sanctuary at Bethel ; or that, if delivered, the appeal was not a recapitulation of a previous ministry of some duration. Equally impossible is it to attempt to define what part of the book was orally uttered and what was not. Like the other prophetic Scriptures, the book is in all likelihood a condensed record of the outstanding truths taught during a more or less

continuous activity. On the other hand it is possible, as the greater number of commentators interpret the statement in vii. 14, 15, that in Amos we have an exception to the general rule, and that his prophetic action was confined to one brief episode of Divine inspiration let into a career otherwise undistinguished by either the gift or the ministry of prophecy. That is, perhaps, the natural, though not the inevitable inference from his protest in reply to the priest's taunt, that he is no prophet getting a living by that profession, but that God took him from following the flock and sent him to prophesy to Israel. That the memoir of his utterances was not composed till some time later seems certain, if the title formed part of the first draft, for it makes mention of the great earthquake as an event that had happened two years later. What the actual interval was cannot, of course, be determined.

5. *Genuineness and Unity of the Book.*—The book, as it left the prophet's hands, is an orderly planned and perfect whole. Beyond one or two possible omissions (iv. 3), or transpositions (v. 7 to follow 9), the genuineness and unity of the book are almost beyond question. It is in the interest of a theory rather than on sufficient grounds of fact, that a few sections are asserted to be interpolations, viz., iv. 13; v. 8, 9; ix. 5, 6, and sometimes vi. 2. The plan of the book is well defined. Amos's message is predominantly one of doom. His duty is to denounce Divine judgment on Israel's incurable depravity. He proclaims nothing less than the downfall of the throne, the exile of the people, and the dissolution of the state.

The book consists of three sections. In the first (i., ii.) there is a general announcement of approaching destruction as a punishment of sin. The second section (iii.—vi.) expands and reiterates the indictment and the menace. The third (vii.—ix.) is a dramatic enforcement and summing-up of the impending doom, passing over into promise for the future. These larger divisions fall easily into smaller subdivisions, and a regular progression of thought may with some degree of confidence be traced through them. The first (i., ii.) has the character of a prelude. The seer has heard the roar of approaching judgment. He sees towering on the northern horizon the black thunderstorm of Assyrian invasion. Already, as in the lurid light that preludes a storm, the fair face of Canaan seems to grow pallid and withered (i. 2). Slowly the lightning-laden cloud rolls over the whole circle of Palestinian states, striking with destruction now one, now another (i. 3—ii. 3), till at the seventh its fires fall on Judah (ii. 4, 5), and then concentrate their condensed and prolonged terrors upon Israel (ii. 6—15). It is usually held that the sins for which the

nations are to be punished are violations of humanity, but it is more consistent to think that, as in the case of Judah and Israel, the common cause of judgment is thwarting God's will in His gracious government of mankind.

The next great division (iii.—vi.) consists of five parts, marked by similar headings and order of thought. The first emphasizes the certainty of judgment. As surely as effect follows cause and proves its existence, the prophet's mission argues God in motion for judgment, the Divine anger postulates sin in Israel, and sin must bring ruin (iii. 1—iv. 3). Next we have the hopelessness of more moderate chastisements producing an adequate repentance (iv. 4—13). Then, as a natural sequel, follows an impassioned exposure of the ineradicable fixedness of their religious and social declension (v. 1—18), which, in the two closing sections, expands into a woe pronounced, first, on their religious debasement (v. 18—27), and, second, on their moral corruption (vi. 1—14).

The last large division (vii.—ix.) is framed upon five visions, devised to depict powerfully the dark destiny of the nation. We have, first, destruction by locusts; second, by fire; third, the wall condemned upon application of the plumb line (vii. 1—9). At this point occurs the interruption of the altercation with the priest Amaziah (vii. 10—17). Resuming, the prophet pictures under the symbol of ripe fruit the nation's readiness for destruction, and works out the thought at some length (viii. 1—14). Finally he presents God standing over the altar in the sinful temple, hurling it in ruins on the heads of the worshippers, pursuing to his death the last one of the fugitives, and making an end of old impenitent Israel (ix. 1—10). But with accomplished judgment comes the recoil of recollection, and the prophet proceeds to show how the sifting of Israel among the nations will end in restoration. Once more the ideal Davidic rule and empire shall be established, and in more than earthly prosperity and permanence God's people shall possess God's land and be God's kingdom on earth (ix. 11—15).

6. *Literary Qualities.*—Jerome remarks that Amos was “rude in speech but not in knowledge”; and Jewish tradition has been pleased to credit him with a stutter or impediment of speech. This is probably the origin of a mistaken idea that his book is badly written, or at least betrays the rusticity of its author. On the contrary, the Hebrew of Amos ranks among the purest and most powerful compositions of the Old Testament. His language is choice and melodious, possibly in a few peculiar spellings recording a provincial pronunciation, or more likely the slips of copyists' pens. His style is terse, dramatic, and simple, but very

pointed and forcible. He loves brief uninvolved sentences, though occasionally carried away into passionate appeal or lyrical outbursts of poetic delineation. He indulges much in question, apostrophe, and exclamation. He is an orator more than an artist or a bard. With all his simplicity we find traces of paronomasia, rhythmic arrangement, and rhetorical construction. His exposition abounds in rich and varied imagery derived from nature, and striking illustrations taken from every-day life. The ordered arrangement, compact style, and general literary finish of his book suggest slow, careful, and leisurely construction, while the fire of its invective, the impetus of its appeals, and the terrible directness of its denunciation prove it the record and embodiment of speech originally orally delivered.

7. *The Prophet's Teaching.*—The teaching of Amos is determined by the wants of his auditors, coloured by the character of his own personality, and limited by the attainments of his time. His prophecy is not a system of theology nor a treatise of moral philosophy. It is a matter-of-fact protest against definite sins and errors, and a practical preparation to secure the triumph of religion in impending strains and changes. Israel, intoxicated by success, and lured by the flesh, had forsaken the true Jehovah. The god of the calf-worship was a physical and carnal deity, pleased with a sensual service, pacified by sacrifices, careless of justice and truth and mercy. The life of the nation may be eaten out by oppression, and corruption, and luxury, and lust, but Israel is Jehovah's people, and—so they argued—He will not for personal pride permit them to suffer loss, but the day of their need will be the day of His gracious and triumphant intervention. This blind superstition was destined speedily to be shattered by the overwhelming avalanche of Assyrian invasion. If faith was to survive, then the lesson of Providence must be interpreted beforehand and set in its true light.

This was the mission of Amos and of the prophets that followed him. Jehovah was not the God the people fancied Him. Sacrifices and incense are nothing to Him whose throne is the universe. Jehovah is a God of mercy and righteousness. With this corrupt Israel He is not pleased, but displeased. Them indeed He chose out of all the nations of the earth to be His people. But, therefore, He will not favour them. He will the more sternly punish their sins. His day of visitation is at hand, but for unrighteous Israel it will be a day, not of deliverance, but of vengeance. He has already gathered the fires of His fury together, and is about to launch them on the states of Palestine, and to execute just retribution on His guilty people. These were startling and creative conceptions, whose value in the growth of revelation was

immense. For a national and fleshly notion of the covenant tie between God and Israel this teaching substituted an ethical and religious. In place of a merely natural explanation of the world's course, it presented the sublime thought of a righteous government and guidance of human history. Beyond all else, it set forth the ethical nature of the Creator and Ruler of the world in unapproachable majesty and might. In the words of a very helpful writer :—" Morality is that for the sake of which all things exist ; it is the alone essential thing in the world. It is no postulate, no idea, but at once a necessity and a fact, the most intensely living of personal powers—Jehovah the God of Hosts." That is a great lesson, and one that religion is too apt to forget.

On the surface Amos may seem to make too much of mere morality, but it is only an appearance. With him, to do right is to serve God, and the motive must be the love of God and of our neighbour. The central note of his prophecy rings like a prelude of the great definition of the Apostle :—" Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

OBADIAH.

1. *Authorship and Date.*—The brief prophecy of Obadiah concerning Edom, which stands fourth among the minor prophets in the Hebrew Bible and fifth in the Septuagint, presents little difficulty to the expositor, but confronts the critic with very perplexing problems. The title declares it to be a record of the vision of Obadiah, and tells us nothing about him. It mentions neither his father nor his birthplace, and in the book itself there is no positive statement of the period in which he lived, nor any quite definite clue to determine the date of his prophecy. All we know certainly about him is his name. That is a derivative of a word meaning servant or worshipper, and the sacred name of Israel's covenant, Jehovah God. It is a type of name common in Semitic languages (Abdeel, Abdallah, &c.), and it occurs very frequently of persons mentioned in the Old Testament—especially of members of the tribe of Levi. Among these the best known are a captain of King Ahab's (1 Kings xviii.) and a prince employed by Jehoshaphat in the religious reform attempted in his reign (2 Chron. xvii. 7).

Tradition, quick to utilise its opportunity in the absence of information, has imagined our prophet identical with several of these, but the combinations are now universally recognised as simply plays of devout fancy, though one or two modern scholars have expressed some favour for the identification with Jehoshaphat's prince. On such conjectures clearly no argument for the date can be founded, and unfortunately not much can be gathered from the place assigned to the book in the canon of the minor prophets. For the order has been determined by other considerations besides chronology, and the arrangement is not the same in the Septuagint.

In both, however, Obadiah holds an early place, and it may be taken for granted that the collectors went, at all events, generally on the plan of placing first the pre-Exilic works. But the presumption in favour of an early date springing from this generali-

sation can hardly be pressed in face of the doubts as to the date of Joel, Jonah, parts of Micah, Zechariah, &c. And on other grounds as well, critics of all schools prefer to explain the place of Obadiah after Amos by the idea that it was inserted here in order to serve as an amplification of the curt reference to Edom in the closing words of that prophecy.

If we turn to the book itself and look in it for some historical allusion or other sure mark of age, we find ourselves still destitute of any solid foothold. An expression in ver. 20 has been seized on by some ingenious interpreters and held to indicate that Obadiah was one of a company of exiles settled on the coast of Phoenicia, or in Egypt, or in Babylonia. But it is a question whether the word means "host," or "stronghold," or "sandy coast," and the proper rendering of the present text of the entire verse is doubtful. If we could settle the locality of the Sepharad, named in the same verse, we might have something to guide us. But it is variously identified by the Ancients with the Bosphorus, Spain, and France, and by modern scholars with a Saparda in Media, or a Ceparda near Ionia (probably Sardis), both of which names occur in the cuneiform inscriptions. Beyond these there is no local or circumstantial detail to serve as a key to the time of the prophecy. We are, therefore, relegated in our conjectures to the general impression produced on our minds by a study of the atmosphere, aim, and actual contents of the book.

2. *Analysis of the Contents.*—The prophet is conscious of a military movement among the nations. It is instigated by Jehovah, directed against Edom, and will result in its downfall and humiliation. Spite of the strength of their rocky fastnesses, they shall be defeated and their wealth plundered. Trusted allies shall betray them, and so with all their vaunted wisdom and might the children of Esau shall be caught in the snare of their own selfish policy and utterly destroyed (vv. 1—9). The cause of their doom is the wrong done to their kinsmen, the Israelites, whom they abandoned in their dire extremity, aiding their foes, rejoicing in their calamity, sharing in the pillage, cutting off the fugitives and selling them into slavery (vv. 10—14). For the Divine judgment, now complete on Israel, must pass on to his heathen enemies and requite their injuries. In the general retribution the rescued people of Jehovah shall dwell safe and holy on Mount Zion, regain their old possessions, burn up Edom like stubble, overflow into the lands of the surrounding peoples, establish a strong government in Zion, and then "the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (vv. 15—21).

3. The fulfilment of Obadiah's prediction of the destruction of Edom, even if we could fix the date with precision, would not

help us much to settle the natal age of the prophecy. Prior to the Exile the relation of Judæa to Idumea was one of friendly alliance, suzerainty, or conquest, alternated by intervals of petty border hostility or open war. Subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem, in which the Edomites sided with the invaders, Idumea suffered apparently a severe disaster at the hands of the Chaldeans soon after; under Judas Maccabæus the country was crippled, and completely conquered by John Hyrcanus a little later; but its worst, and what we may fairly count its final overthrow, did not take place till after the birth of Christ.

This difficulty in fixing the fulfilment matters little. To determine the birth of a prophecy we must seek not its ultimate fruits in the future, but its hidden subterranean roots in the past. A prophetic word of God, at all events as a general rule, does not emerge out of nothing, but grows out of living conditions, embodies the needs and aspirations of the time, and satisfies the immediate spiritual necessities of the men to whom it is given. We may, therefore, take it that Obadiah does not predict in cold blood atrocities to be perpetrated by the Edomites and denounce retribution on them, but that his oracle of vengeance rests on some definite great disaster suffered by Jerusalem, aggravated and embittered by the treachery and cruelty of the Edomites.

The outstanding military calamities recorded in the history are: (1) the capture of Jerusalem by Shishak under Rehoboam (1 Kings xiv., 2 Chron. xii.); (2) the invasion of the Philistines and Arabians in the time of Jehoram (2 Chron. xxi.); (3) the defeat of Amaziah by Jehoash of Israel and partial demolition of the defences of Jerusalem (2 Kings xiv., 2 Chron. xxv.); (4) the successful campaign of Ephraim and Syria against Ahaz (2 Chron. xxviii.); and (5) the sack and destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans (2 Kings xxiv., 2 Chron. xxxvi.). With the exception of the first, each of these has been made the occasion of Obadiah's oracle, and the book is variously ascribed to the reigns of Jehoram, Uzziah, Ahaz, the period just before or after the fall of Jerusalem, while a few critics place it after the Restoration, or even reduce it to the end of the fourth century.

It may be fairly said that opinion is seriously divided only between either the reigns of Jehoram and Uzziah, or the time of the Chaldean conquest. To choose between these must be difficult, perhaps impossible, for we have nothing more definite to go upon than our knowledge of the history, which is meagre, and our impressions of the several elements of the prophecy—a method of investigation which is too purely subjective to give results that are sure. The description of Edom's pride (vv. 1—9) has an archaic ring in its graphic imagery. Its adoption in the prophecy

suggests that at the time Edom was independent, strong, prosperous, and in high repute for wisdom and wealth. The reference (ver. 7) to confederates indicates that Edom had entered into alliance with a power or powers hostile to Judæa. So far these appearances suit admirably the Chaldean combination, but are probably equally consistent with the earlier dates.

The following passage (vv. 10—14), whose imperative (see Revised Version) constitutes not a future warning but a dramatic denunciation, describes a series of cruel and treacherous injuries inflicted on the Jews by their Idumean kinsmen. The warmth of the invective proves the actuality of the wrong, and either its recent occurrence or the indelible nature of the resentment created by it. Now Edomite treachery and cruelty had existed all along and been resented by Israel (Amos i. 6, 9, 11; ix. 12, &c.), but in the precise form and detail of the offence and in the intensity of the indignation produced we find nothing comparable till we come to certain Exilic utterances (Ezek. xxv., xxxv.; Lam. iv.; Psalm cxxxvii.), which read as if they had been written in chorus with the heat and passion of the one before us. This resemblance is not a proof, but it makes a strong presumption for the later origin of our prophecy.

It is perhaps true that the form, in which the conception of the day of the Lord (ver. 15) appears, indicates an advanced point in the progress of prophecy, but a much more solid argument may be built upon the picture of Israel's disaster and restoration. It is not merely a disabled state or a partially plundered capital that we have delineated, but a dismembered and dispossessed and dispersed nation. Moreover, the chosen people no longer exists in the divided kingdoms of Ephraim and Judah, for in the Restoration the latter bears both names (ver. 18), and is to occupy the lands that used to belong to the former (ver. 19). The impression is hardly to be resisted, that this situation is incompatible with any earlier period than the Chaldean conquest, and that the prophet regards it not as a disaster anticipated, but as a calamity already felt and experienced.

This critical construction of the date might be allowed to hold the field unchallenged, were it not for one grave difficulty that stands in the way. The opening section of Obadiah is reproduced, frequently with verbal exactness, in a prophecy against Edom found in the forty-ninth chapter of Jeremiah. The resemblance is too close to allow a doubt of the relationship. The only question is, which is the parent and which the child, unless, indeed, they should prove to be brothers. In Obadiah the ideas appear in a natural order and logical progression, making a harmonious and compact picture, while in Jeremiah they are reversed

in sequence, broken off from one another, mingled with other matter, and so deprived of their cumulative and orderly significance. Thus verses 1—4, 5—6, 8—9 of Obadiah correspond to verses 14—16, 9—10, 7—8 in Jeremiah, where the omission of all reference to the folly of trusting perfidious allies (Obad. 7) leaves the ridicule of Edom's pretended wisdom without definite justification. Therefore, if the one is directly dependent on the other we are forced to the conclusion that Obadiah is the original, and that Jeremiah has borrowed from him, just as in the prophecies against Moab (Jer. xlviij.) he incorporates elements from the older oracles embedded in Isaiah xv., xvi. and Numbers xxi. and xxiv.

An acute and microscopically minute argument has been led to show from details of language that the obligation is on the other side, but it is met by an equally ingenious analysis, and, moreover, cannot outweigh the conviction produced by the superior coherence, conciseness, and simplicity of the passage in Obadiah. Now, spite of an attempt to question the date if not the genuineness of Jer. xlix., it may be taken for granted that the chapter was produced some time prior to the fall of Jerusalem, and by the above chain of reasoning the opening section of Obadiah was known to the author. The dilemma is met in several ways. The conclusion is accepted, counted proof positive for the earlier dates, and Obadiah is relegated to the reigns of Jehoram or Uzziah, notwithstanding the perplexities occasioned by the closing pictures of the production. Or the two prophets are taken to have been contemporaries, and by either allowing Obadiah's entire description to be predictive in respect of the offence as well as the punishment, or by dating the forty-ninth chapter of Jeremiah a little later than the Chaldean disaster, a sufficient interval is created between them to permit of the literary use presupposed in the relation of the two passages.

A third course is possible, and has much to commend it. The correspondence is entirely confined to the first section of Obadiah, for other alleged parallels are trivial and dubious. This opening paragraph of our prophet, as we have seen, suggests by its character and style an early origin, while it is only in what follows that we encounter the strong marks of the Chaldean period. The practice of building prophecies fitted to the time on the utterances of earlier seers was a common one, as we can see in the writings of Isaiah, Micah, Joel, Jeremiah, &c. May it not, therefore, be that an inspired man of God, to comfort and hearten his generation in the dark Chaldean age, took up the defiance of Israel's ancient enemies bequeathed by the faith of a former age, and, as Jeremiah had used it in anticipation of the catastrophe

adapted it to meet the doubts and perplexities and to satisfy the demands of faith in the special circumstances and relations that followed the great collapse of Israel's national existence? The supposition is one that meets all the points of the problem. It explains certain variations of atmosphere and point of view in the book, the correspondence of Jeremiah with one division only, the remarkable resemblances between certain phrases in the other division and the Book of Joel, and fits admirably into the suggestions of the particular place assigned to the prophecy in the canon of the minor prophets.

4. *Object of Prophecy.*—In later times Edom came to be the supreme antipathy and the typical enemy of Jewry. So, when the actual Edomites ceased to be, the name was transferred first to tyrant Rome and then to persecuting Christendom, and the impassioned words of Obadiah became a favourite vehicle for the expression of national and religious hatred. That is a mis-understanding and a misuse of the book. The prophecy is, indeed, instigated by indignation against Edom, and the retributive destruction of that people is its theme. But the subject is worked out in a large fashion that precludes the suspicion of petty vengefulness, and justifies the book's place in the record of revelation. The motive is not the gratification of national spite, nor is the aim to either warn or edify the Edomites. The seer speaks out of the need of his own heart and to the hearts of his people. What creates his vision and compels its utterance is an indestructible sense of the eternal justice and fidelity, and of the Divine destiny of Israel in building up the kingdom of God on earth. The tragedy of Edom is but a part in the great drama. It is therefore presented on a vast stage, and has the world's history for its background. Very real and concrete to the prophet, no doubt, are the antagonisms of Israel and his enemies, but none the less really and consciously, even if in a fashion grand beyond his conceptions, it is the collision of universal forces and everlasting principles, that is embodied in them. Limited and material the presentment of those issues may be, but they carry in their bosom the consummation of the ages. Within the rivalry of Edom and Israel there was wrapped the eternal antithesis of truth and falsehood, good and evil, and the vision of an earthly kingdom on Mount Zion is finding its fulfilment in the silent, slow, but sure advent of the kingdom of God and of our Christ.

JONAH.

1. *Peculiarity of the Book.*—The position of the Book of Jonah among the minor prophets is remarkable. It is not a prophecy but a narrative. Unlike all the other members of the group, it does not contain the utterance, or a collection of the utterances, of a prophet. With the exception of the words, “ Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown,” it is from beginning to end the recital of a prophet’s self-will and ignorance, and their discipline and correction by God. The interest of the story, the striking character of some of its situations, and the use made of it by our Lord, have stirred the imagination of its readers, exercised the ingenuity of theologians, and made the book the best known and most widely studied of all the shorter prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament.

2. *Life of Jonah.*—The prophet whose strange experiences are recorded in the book is described as Jonah, the son of Amitai. Only once elsewhere do these proper names recur in the Old Testament, and there in the same relationship to one another. In 2 Kings xiv. 25, we read that Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, “restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He spake by the hand of His servant Jonah, the son of Amitai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hefer.” The identity of the two men can hardly be made subject to the shadow of a doubt. We may, therefore, take it for granted that the prophet of our story was born at Gath-hefer, a small town on the eastern frontier of Zebulon, a little over an hour’s journey north of Nazareth, and probably represented by the modern hamlet of El-Mesched.

His prophetic activity must have been either prior to or contemporary with the reign of Jeroboam II., that is, somewhere about the year B.C. 800. From the nature of the reference to him in Kings, it is evident that he must have been the author of important and considerable oracles, which lingered in oral

tradition or were embodied in written records. But no specimen of his work has come down to us, unless he is the author, as has been suggested, of the ancient prophecy against Moab, incorporated in Isaiah xv. and xvi.; but this is at best no more than an ingenious conjecture. In the Greek revision of the Book of Tobit (xiv. 4) the threat of Jonah against Nineveh is quoted, and there are several references to him in the New Testament (Matt. xii. 39—41, xvi. 4; Luke xi. 29—30).

The Jewish tradition, mentioned by Jerome, that he was the miraculously restored son of the widow of Zarephath is on the face of it evidently a play of rabbinical fancy, founded on the resemblance between the meaning of the name Amitai (truth) and the exclamation of the glad-hearted mother—"Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth" (1 Kings xvii. 24). The grave of Jonah is shown at El-Mesched, and among the ruins of Nineveh there is a mound named after him, Nebbi Junus.

3. *Salient Features.*—The salient features of the story may be summarised as follows. Jonah, commissioned to denounce doom on Nineveh for its wickedness, recoils from the task. He fears that the city may repent and God relent, and he either counts such a result detrimental to his professional repute, or is reluctant to be the minister of salvation to the hated heathen capital. To avoid this repugnant mission to the East, and to escape from the presence of Jehovah, he takes ship for Tarshish in the extreme West. Pursued by a storm, detected as the culprit by the casting of lots, Jonah submits, confesses his guilt, and, to save his innocent companions from sharing his fate, causes himself to be thrown overboard. Instantly the storm ceases; the sailors fear Jehovah, offer sacrifices and make vows; while Jonah, now penitent and submissive, is preserved from drowning by a great fish, prepared by God to swallow him up alive, and convey him back to the shore.

In this position of imprisonment, but also of deliverance, Jonah composes a poem of grateful thanksgiving to God, and after three days and three nights of confinement is cast out upon the dry land. Despatched anew to preach to Nineveh, Jonah complies, enters the great city, proclaims its destruction in forty days, produces universal panic and repentance, whereupon God pities and pardons the contrite capital. Filled with chagrin at the foreseen result of his mission, the prophet complains of the Divine compassion, and is rebuked. Still dissatisfied and rebellious, he is sharply disciplined, and finally put to shame by the startling inconsistency between his excessive regard for and sorrow over the loss of a plant which he had not worked to pro-

duce, but that had given him pleasure, while he grudges God's sparing the great city with its myriads of innocent human lives His own Divine hands had made. Thus the book ends with the majestic thought that in God's government of men, Gentile as well as Jew, penitence universally procures pardon, since human life is everywhere God's loving workmanship, in which He has pleasure, and which He will not willingly pain, and only in the last extremity of impenitence destroy.

4. *Structure and Style.*—Though the composition makes no express claim to be from the pen of Jonah, and the narrative throughout is carried on in the third person, it has been taken for granted in Jewish and Christian tradition alike that the book is a piece of autobiography. It begins abruptly with a conjunction, as if detached from an antecedent narrative, and it ends in an unfinished fashion without telling us what became of the hero. Hence it is thought that it may have originally belonged to a larger biography of Jonah, or to a collection of stories of the early prophets of action who preceded the prophets of speech and writing. There are striking resemblances in it to the tales of Elijah and Elisha recorded in the Books of the Kings, particularly to the account of Elijah's despair (1 Kings xix.), while the conversation between God and the prophet irresistibly reminds us of the Divine dialogues in the early chapters of Genesis.

The style throws no decisive light upon the probable date, though the vocabulary presents a number of peculiar words and uses of words that have been held to indicate a late origin. But recent Hebrew grammarians incline to ascribe such peculiarities rather to a northern origin or to local individual circumstances. The statement that Nineveh was an exceeding great city has been taken to show that at the time it was penned the capital of Assyria had already long been a thing of the past; but the phrase may be an editorial note, or it may equally well be construed as a description of the city as Jonah found it. The poetical prayer, recorded in chapter ii., is a mosaic of quotations from the Book of Psalms, which certainly furnishes a strong argument against a very early date, provided this poem is an original part of the composition.

Very powerful arguments may be drawn from the contents, spirit, and theological tendency of the book. How, it is asked, could such a work have been produced during the Assyrian period? Is such a friendly attitude towards Nineveh conceivable, while the Assyrian capital was the object of Hebrew hate and dread, and the focus of the bitterest invective of every Jewish prophet? How, too, could such an unflattering picture of a

prophet be painted during the prime and glory of living prophecy? On the other hand, it may be asked, how teaching so broad in its charity and free in its scope is consistent with the hard narrowness and selfish bigotry of later post-Exilic Judaism? Such considerations have, and ought to have, great weight; but their effect will vary according to individual pre-conceptions and beliefs as to the history of Israel's literature and religion. Accordingly we need not be surprised to find that this enigmatical book is ascribed by competent and devout scholars to various dates, that range between the eighth and fourth centuries before Christ. Nor, in the absence of any express declaration or decisive mark of time in the book itself, is the date likely to be otherwise than long an undecided problem of Old Testament study.

5. *Historical Validity.*—Coming now to the contents of the narrative, we are confronted by a question as to the literary character of the work. Have we to deal with a literal, matter-of-fact history, or with an allegorical and pictorial composition? To answer this question we must examine the story, and strive to neither exaggerate its peculiarities nor minimise its difficulties. Unquestionably the narrative contains much that is startling, and that ought to make us in any case reserved in our assertions, and chary of dogmatism. He does but a sorry service to Revelation who lays on it needless loads and burdens too heavy to be borne. On the other hand the actual perplexities of this book have often been unrealistically magnified, and not a few have been gratuitously invented.

It has been urged that the mission of Jonah to Nineveh is inconsistent with the idea of Hebrew prophecy, and a solecism in Old Testament religious thought. Doubtless it is unusual and in some respects unique, but in remembrance of the relations maintained by his predecessors Elijah and Elisha with Syria, the connection of Jonah with Assyria is not so utterly out of the question (compare also Hosea v. 13). It was also the fashion to regard the descriptions of Nineveh's area and population as grotesque exaggerations, but recent discoveries and decipherments tend to confirm them and their echoes in classical authors.

Much has been made of the representation of Jonah composing in the whale's belly an elaborate poem, which in its general tenor and in some of its details is not very evidently appropriate to the position of a man in such a living tomb. This difficulty, which springs from a literalistic reading of the story, was long ago disposed of by the common-sense of Luther, who remarked that we are not to suppose that Jonah "said just these words with his mouth and set them so in order," but they show us

what were the mood of his mind and the thoughts of his heart as he fought his battle with death. The amazing effect on Nineveh of the preaching of a prophet in a foreign tongue and in the name of an alien deity is a graver difficulty, but not by any means unthinkable in face of the astonishing possibilities of superstitious awe and religious panic. Much more unaccountable is the utter absence of any reference to so extraordinary an event in the historical books of the Bible, and in the copious subsequent prophecies that deal with Assyria and its relation to Israel. To those who accept the fact of miracle the marvels of the fish and the gourd are not in themselves stumbling-blocks, and a reverent faith in the supernatural of revelation will repudiate all well-meant attempts to reduce their wondrousness by unreliable travellers' stories and vagaries of natural history.

The real difficulty about the element of the miraculous in the Book of Jonah consists, for believing minds, rather in the amount and the kind of it. From beginning to end the narrative is one continuous chain of surprises, providences, and marvels of a very unusual description. And what is more significant still, much of it is, so far as we can perceive, unnecessary for the practical accomplishment of the matter-of-fact object assigned, while it as evidently serves with unequalled effectiveness a didactic purpose, *viz.*, to emphasize and throw into intense relief certain truths of the very first importance in revelation. To this must be added a certain indefiniteness and lack of detail which mark the story. We are not informed where Jonah was landed, how he made his way to Nineveh, the name of the Assyrian king, what passed between monarch and prophet, while what finally became of Jonah is untold in the story, which in fact terminates in a moral or doctrine.

The value of these observations, and their critical import may be very diversely construed, but there is general agreement on the following points. The miraculous ingredient forms the very warp and woof of the composition, and cannot by any possibility be detached without the literary demolition of the piece. Nevertheless the fact that the mechanism or marvel of the supernatural are not dwelt upon or at all elaborated, proves that the miraculous is not the prime interest or theme, but simply the machinery or vehicle of a didactic purpose. And in like manner the historical is not an object in itself, but is subordinated as means to end to subserve the ethical and religious teaching, which is the supreme motive and final aim of the book.

6. *Various Interpretations.*—These considerations have originated a considerable variety of interpretations, and have had their proper influence in shaping the views of even the most

zealous defenders of the historical validity of the narrative and the most uncompromising believers in the supernatural. Thus it is urged that, while the book is a trustworthy chronicle of actual events, the essential significance of these must be sought in their symbolical character, and their permanent value in the typical or prophetic import of the occurrences. Some devout but imaginative interpreters have endeavoured to reduce the difficulty of the miraculous by quoting parallel wonders from apocryphal bits of natural history, or by supposing that the conscience-stricken prophet had a dream in the ship, or that the story grew out of a misunderstanding of a poem of Jonah's.

It has also been suggested that the story is a Hebrew adaptation of the myth of the rescue of Andromeda from the sea-monster on the Joppa coast by Perseus, or the parallel myth of Hesione and Hercules, or that it is a variation of the Babylonian myth about the fish god Oannes, who rose from the sea to teach the people the arts and institutions of civilisation. This theory has as little likelihood as have the naturalistic evasions of the supernatural, which is inextricably woven into the framework of the narrative.

There is probably no intermediate resting-place for intelligent faith between a simple acceptance of the history, and the theory held by many believing scholars, who, influenced by no shrinking from the supernatural but purely by the literary character and didactic bent of the story, have found in it a kind of composition akin to the Book of Job, or the pictorial prophetic visions and symbolical actions recounted in the memoirs of the prophets, and which in the present case may be more exactly defined as a species of spiritual allegory or religious parable, founded on a more or less extensive basis of historical fact. Between these theories opinions will continue to be divided, at least until we have reached a more thorough knowledge of ancient modes of thought, and a profounder understanding of the variety of intellectual channel and literary expression open to a Divine revelation.

7. *The Inspired Meaning.*—It is a happy circumstance that we may differ widely in our estimate of the literary framework of the book without missing its inspired meaning or frustrating its revelation purpose. Here indeed all parties meet together and are substantially agreed, though not without interesting variation in point of view and proportion of component parts. To determine the central truth embodied in the picture we have simply to regard it as a whole and from a sufficient distance. It is evident that the sovereign aim of the artist, from first to last, is to throw into sharp relief an element in God's government of

the world, and an attribute of His character, by contrasting them with the startlingly antagonistic mood and conflicting action of the prophet. It is, therefore, only in a subordinate and indirect fashion that such doctrines emerge as God's providential lordship over all things, the resistlessness of His will, the grandeur and responsibility of the prophetic office, &c. Too narrow in conception, and negative in form, are such summaries of the teaching as that the story is a warning to the prophets against unfaithfulness, or an admonition to Israel against impenitence, or a vindication of the prophets against attack on the ground that some of their predictions had not been fulfilled.

An intelligent and sympathetic study of the book will, we think, justify the opinion that the ethical and religious purpose of the piece embraces the following points. Prophecy is remedial, designed not to destroy but to save, conditional therefore on human conduct, and so in the letter of its predictions may remain unfulfilled. In every nation and not in Israel alone, contrition and submission secure the divine pity and pardon. For God, the maker of all, loves what He has made, hates to destroy, and will seek to save to the uttermost. Israel's ultimate relation to the heathen is, therefore, one of compassionate endeavour to bring them also into the kingdom of God, for this is the will of God concerning them. That being so, it is evident how finely appropriate are Christ's references to Jonah.

The Jews, in their narrow-hearted particularism, hating Jesus for His embodiment in Himself and in His preaching of Israel's world-wide mission of redemption, demand of Him a sign. He answers that through their obstinacy and rebelliousness the story of Jonah shall be repeated in His person. As the prophet's repudiation of his saving mission handed him over to death, while his resumption of it restored him to life for its accomplishment, in like manner their rejection of Jesus' mission would produce His death and burial, while His loyal fidelity to it would secure His resurrection for its achievement. But, whereas the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, such is the hardness of their hearts, that they remain, and will continue to remain, obdurate to the ministry of One far mightier than the prophet of olden days. In the most profound sense, therefore, the story of Jonah is typical of the life and work of Jesus, while no book of the Old Testament more nearly approaches the breadth and depth of gospel universalism, and the grandeur of the New Testament conception of the fatherly love of God.

MICAH.

1. *Name and Birthplace of Micah.*—The sixth book of the minor prophets is described in the title as a collection of the teaching of the Judæan prophet Micah. In a reference to his work contained in the Book of Jeremiah, the name is written in a lengthier form as Micajah. It was a common name among the Hebrews, and occurs many times of various individuals in the Old Testament. There is a remarkable divergence in the spelling. The oldest and full form seems to have been Micahjahu, intended to express the central article of Jewish faith in the challenge, “Who is like Jehovah ?” Some of the variations are probably eccentricities of spelling, and others contractions in familiar use. It is somewhat surprising not to find the full form in the title of the prophet’s book, at all events if it is original or early.

He is distinguished as “the Morasthite,” which is not a patronymic, but a designation of his birthplace. This was not, as some have supposed, the Mareshah, mentioned in i. 15, but Moresheth-gath (i. 14), an obscure hamlet in the western lowland of Judæa, bordering on the Philistine country. In Jerome’s time the place was known in the vicinity of Eleutheropolis; it claimed the prophet’s grave, and a Christian church was built over it. Details of his personal relations and career are found in Jewish and Christian traditions, but they are full of palpable blunders and deserve no credence. The confusion of our prophet with Micaiah, son of Imlah, who lived in the time of Ahab, is probably due to the fact that in the Hebrew text of 1 Kings xxii. 28 the opening words of this book are ascribed to the earlier prophet, but it is noteworthy that in the Septuagint (with the exception of one codex) the ascription is not found. The identification is of course baseless, and in the face of Micah’s distinctive appellation as the Morasthite somewhat surprising.

2. *Mission and Date.*—Apart from the record of his prophecies we have but one absolutely authentic reminiscence of the life-work

of Micah. It is related in the twenty-sixth chapter of Jeremiah. The prophet of woes, at the bidding of God, had proclaimed the imminent destruction of the town and of the temple. Arraigned on a capital charge, he is saved by the intervention of certain elders. "Micah the Morasthite," say they, "prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest (Micah iii. 12). Did Hezekiah, king of Judah, and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them?"

The reference is of great interest. It shows us what a powerful influence was exerted by Micah at the court and in the capital. Further, it tells us that in the opinion of contemporaries and later generations his predictions of destruction were not fulfilled in the time or in the forms contemplated by the prophet, retribution having been averted by repentance. Finally, it gives us a definite date for one, and that the chief oracle in his book, for the passage (iii. 12) is quoted exactly as it stands, and it may fairly be counted the keystone of the whole.

A reasonable inference would be that the entire contents belong to the reign of Hezekiah, and, since the fall of Samaria is contemplated as proximate, to the opening years of it. On the other hand, the title assigns to the prophet a more prolonged period of activity, extending over the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. In support of this statement various references and descriptions in the book are instanced as relevant to the times of the first-named kings, but wholly inconsistent with the government of Hezekiah. The historical records do not paint for us the actual state of things with sufficient definiteness to allow of this kind of evidence having much weight, while a similar train of reasoning would tend to show that chapters vi.—vii. belong to the monarchy of Manasseh. Nor can much be made of the passage in chapter iv. (verses 1—4), which appears likewise in the second chapter of Isaiah, a prophecy spoken probably in the age of Ahaz. For though Micah's version is the fuller, the probability is that neither borrows from the other, but that a famous prediction of an earlier seer has been incorporated in the personal utterance of both.

In all likelihood the title does not intend to assign the reigns of the three kings as the period during which Micah's book was gradually composed, but rather as the era in which his prophetic activity fell, and that in large, general terms, that should exhibit

him as belonging to the later portion of the epoch, which includes Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. The great manifesto mentioned in Jeremiah may have been the culmination of a protracted career, and in it he may have summed up the scattered elements and lines of his earlier prophetic teaching. To disentangle and date these in his memoir is a task rendered impossible by its summary and often enigmatic arrangement. Like many other records of prophecy, it is a condensation of speeches and predictions emitted on many and various occasions, and was probably put together during the first years of Hezekiah, perhaps on the particular occasion referred to in Jeremiah.

3. *Unity of the Book.*—Of recent years the unity of the book has been strongly questioned. If it is one continuous composition by the same pen, we are compelled to recognise several very abrupt transitions and enormous changes of scene. That is, nevertheless, a feature found in other prophecies, and any excess of it in Micah's style may be due to mental make, as in the case of Hosea, or perhaps to the fashion in which prophetic memoirs were compiled.

As the book stands there seems to be a formal division into three parts, viz., chapters i.—ii., iii.—v., vi.—vii., each section introduced by the invocation “Hear ye,” starting with denunciation of sin, passing on into menaces of judgment, and ending with promise. In the first of these the element of threatening preponderates; in the second the promise is predominantly dwelt upon; while the third vindicates the justice, certainty, and inner meaning of the Divine dispensation. So far, then, the structure seems intelligible, consistent, and coherent. But it is pointed out that the promise at the end of the first section (ii. 12—13) comes in very abruptly and is embodied in two single verses. If these be removed then we get a more massive and simple division. For the denunciation of judgment rolls on unbroken through chapters i.—iii., while the background of promise fills the second act in chapters iv.—v. It is, therefore, suggested that the couple of interrupting verses did not stand in the original plan of the book. Either they were a marginal note that has crept into the text, or, belonging to some other point in the prophecy, they have somehow got misplaced.

The assumption is not of such consequence as to need discussion. A more important criticism is as to the origin of chapters vi.—vii. As we pass into them we are conscious of a distinct change of atmosphere. The tone is more subdued. The antagonisms present to the mind of the speaker are altered in character. Sin, social disorder, alienation from God are there, and in even aggravated degree; but the kind has changed. There is the

gloom of a reign of terror, an embittered religious scepticism, coupled with superstition and a corruption that has reached maturity. One thinks naturally of the reign of Manasseh, and so the passage is assigned to that time, whether written by Micah or a disciple. But there are not wanting explanations of these features of the section, not to mention the blank that would be left by its excision in the general plan of the book, and the element of uncertainty in all such reasoning.

If, however, the separation be justified we should probably carry it out a little further, and hold vii. 7—20, as contemporary with Isaiah xi.—lxvi., which it strikingly resembles in tone and thought. In chapters iv.—v. the leaps from threat to promise are peculiarly sudden. Various causes are suggested, and it is not impossible that the original draft may have been enlarged or annotated. But as it stands the difficulty of individual transitions is diminished by the appearance of a certain symmetrical arrangement, by which in succession the main elements of disaster, announced in iii. 12, are taken up, amplified, and made to pass into a picture of restoration and subsequent triumph.

A more practical question is, whether the reference to Babylon in iv. 10, is original, or is a subsequent explanation introduced into the text. It is urged that as Assyria is the threatening enemy the introduction of Babylon is irrelevant, and that it is Assyria over which renovated Israel is to triumph (v. 6). Besides, as we know from Jeremiah that the destruction which Micah anticipated was averted, how likely that the abiding principle of his prophecy should be adapted to later circumstances by himself or another. Further, as a proof of the possibility, we find that in the Greek text of the Septuagint there is introduced an extra reference to Babylon in iv. 8. On the contrary it is urged that as Babylon was a conquest of the Assyrian arms about that time, and as 2 Kings xvii. 24 and the inscriptions inform us that the populations of captured towns were often interchanged to diminish risk of revolt, the idea of captivity in Babylon is quite in place. If we omit the mention of Babylon, we get a simple but favourite thought of Micah, that only in the people's reduction to a primitive, uncorrupted life, stripped of luxury and military show, could they reach the retrieval of their lost hopes. The question is one to be settled on purely exegetical grounds, and quite apart from dogmatical prepossessions.

4. *Analysis of Contents.*—Passing from these formal questions we come to consider the contents of the book as it lies in our hands. The first great division (chapters i., ii.) summons the whole world to witness a Divine drama. Striding over the mountains, in the thunderstorm of Assyrian invasion, God is

advancing to chastise the sins of His people, which are concentrated in the idolatry and wickedness of the capitals. The first act in the tragedy is the destruction of Samaria, but the evil does not stop there ; the desolating scourge sweeps on towards Jerusalem.

In a series of vivid pictures of the horrors of invasion, connected by word-play with the names of a number of provincial towns, the course and completeness of Judah's ruin are portrayed. Reverting to the authors of this impending judgment, he attacks the privileged and powerful classes for their fraudulent oppression of the poor and their merciless rapacity, threatening them with retributive humiliation and extirpation. Their sneer against himself and his God he retorts, defends the justice of Jehovah, once more pillories their heartless cruelties perpetrated on the weak and defenceless, declares the very land is sick of it, and must purge itself of them and their abominations, and taunts them with their besotted trust in lying prophets, that promise them physical prosperity in spite of moral wrong. Then in swift recoil from the dark prospect he turns to the brighter future beyond, and pictures the nation's restoration to God's favour, and to happy enjoyment of the land of promise.

The second division (chapters iii.—v.) travels over similar ground, only omitting all mention of Samaria, condensing the threatening, and expanding the delineation of promise. We have, first, an impassioned invective against the nobles and judges, who misuse power, pervert justice, grind down the indigent, and drive the needy to desperation. As they showed no mercy, they shall get none from God. Next he scathes with burning irony the hypocritical and venal tribe of prophets that support the corrupt chiefs, and threatens them with the confusion, ignominy, and ruin that must come on men whose action is based on external expediency, not founded on the eternal laws of truth and justice. Bursting into a conjoint denunciation of corrupt judges, priests, prophets, and nobles, who have built a splendid and luxurious capital out of the blood, and tears, and ruin of their country, the prophet reaches the climax of his burden in the terrible declaration that Zion the royal residence, Jerusalem the capital, and the Temple itself shall be laid in ruins and desolation.

With that a revulsion of feeling ensues. Starting with the crowning element of disaster, the seer beholds the restored Temple in unprecedented magnificence, accepted as the religious and moral centre of the world, exercising peaceful control over the people, while around it Israel dwells in safety, happy in repossession of more than its ancient Davidic empire. Reverting

again to the second element of disaster, the defeat and depopulation of the city, he describes the certainty that this calamity will be followed by restoration, and depicts the inviolable strength of the new community in a picture (that has a touch of the apocalyptic in it) of the nations gathered against Zion, dreaming of its destruction, but knowing not that God has brought them there for their utter overthrow, as to a threshing-floor for judgment.

A third time he catches up the sentence of doom, and, singling out the downfall of the monarchy, he predicts in stately language the advent of the ideal ruler of Israel, who, springing from the old Davidic cradle, and ruling in the strength and spirit of God, shall establish Israel, repel Assyria, and make the chosen people resistless among the nations, like a lion among sheep, and like showers that descend from God and do not depend on man. The section concludes with the thought that in this new era the purified Israel shall be purged of all sinful forms of worship and forbidden sources of moral support, as well as from all reliance in merely temporal resources and muniments of war. The nation shall derive its strength from God, and not from an arm of flesh.

The third section (chapters vi., vii.), counting it as an integral part of the book, is best construed as a less impassioned, more thoughtful, and somewhat apologetic confirmation of the necessity, justice, and inevitable issue of the imminent calamity. In structure it is exceedingly dramatic, falling constantly into dialogue, in which the speakers rapidly change.

The prophet opens a process before the everlasting mountains, and claims a hearing for Jehovah. God introduces His case with the demand, whether His loyalty to the covenant with Israel has in any point faltered, or furnished ground for their disloyalty. Responding to the appeal, the people offer compensation and amendment in the form of sacrifices, even of their first-born. This offer the prophet rejects indignantly, pointing out that nothing but moral and religious regeneration will suffice. Jehovah takes up the plea, and points out that with all their multiplied ceremonial observances their private, commercial, and political life is full of dishonesty and violence; that undeterred by common chastisements they persist in their iniquities; and that, therefore, a righteous God cannot accept them, nor exempt them from destruction. Further, the faintest hope of real repentance is exhibited as impossible in the picture of one searching vainly for a good man amid this corrupt society, in which the most sacred ties of affection have lost all binding force, and which must dissolve of its own rottenness. But even in this

uttermost darkness there is light. Affliction exerts its remedial power. A new and better spirit awakes in smitten Israel—of humility, penitence, longing to atone and regain God's favour. Gradually assurance that God's purpose cannot be frustrated, though it may be delayed, supervenes. The Divine voice is heard promising restoration and a more glorious future than ever the past has known.

And so the book ends in an exquisite prayer of trustful desire, and a magnificent confession of faith in the transcendency of God in His attributes of mercy and of truth.

5. *Literary and Moral Characteristics.*—The teaching of Micah possesses remarkable qualities both in style and thought. His language is vigorous, graphic, and varied. At times he is emotional and pathetic, anon terse and trenchant, and again elevated and sublime, as the occasion and subject demand. He does not quite command the grand style of Isaiah, but he is more sharply telling and direct. In width of survey and weight of movement he differs from his great contemporary, somewhat as a tribune of the people or a preacher of righteousness differs from a statesman of the first order.

It is singular that Micah takes no notice of foreign policy, never mentions the rival Assyrian and Egyptian parties at court, nor deals in any way with questions of state; but he burns with indignation against the eviction of the peasants from their small holdings, and is moved by the social wrongs and inhumanities of the time in a fashion that forces us to feel he must himself have been a man of the people, and probably a resident in a district peculiarly exposed to those forms of evil that were breaking up the old happy, simple life of primitive Israel. Against such actual iniquities and injuries to Jehovah's people his polemic is mainly directed, though he clearly recognises that they have their origin in disloyalty to the nation's Divine Head, and the spirit of His true religion. In this he resembles Amos, but his conception of right is a more deeply ethical one, as is also his thought of the tie between Israel and Jehovah. It is indeed a very profound and noble idea that is embodied in the picture of the pleading in chapter vi., and in the aspect of the covenant that is there put forward. The personal and moral so completely predominate over the merely juridical and legal.

The Messianic idea of Micah is a remarkably developed one, though he has not fully worked out the process by which it is to be reached. For its basis he takes the idealised picture of the heroic, happy, united empire of King David, in which the corruption, extremes of wealth and poverty, foreign humiliation, and internal miseries of the present age were unknown. His vision

is that of the kingdom of God, though clothed in earthly forms, and cramped by temporal limitations. Its foundations are justice, mercy, and the fear of God; its destiny world-wide dominion; and the issue peace, prosperity, and righteousness. The whole bright dream centres round a kingly figure that emerges from the eternal purposes of God, after the flesh of Bethlehem origin like David, but clothed with attributes and powers Divine. No wonder that in many features of the story of Jesus of Nazareth we catch echoes of the Book of Micah, all along that pathway of glory and of shame that stretches from the cradle of Bethlehem to the agony of Gethsemane and the cross of Calvary.

NAHUM.

1. *Meaning of Name.*—The place assigned to Nahum in the succession of the minor prophets is the same in the Hebrew Bible and in the Septuagint. Nor after this point is there any divergence in the arrangement of the books that follow. The order is identical in the Massoretic canon and in the Greek, the oldest of the versions. The word Nahum probably means the comforter, and in conformity with the name the prophet's oracle is a message of consolation. In form it is an impassioned anticipation of the destruction of Assyrian Nineveh, the oppressor of God's people, but its inner motive is an undying faith in God's redemptive purpose, and its destination to comfort the heart of Israel well-nigh sick with hope so long deferred.

2. *The Prophet's Personality.*—Of Nahum we know nothing except what we can gather from his book. The name was probably not uncommon, though no other person bears it in the Old Testament. There is a Nahum among the ancestors of Joseph (Luke iii. 25); our prophet is mentioned in the apocryphal books of Esdras; and the name possibly appears in the inscriptions of Phoenician origin. In the title prefixed to the prophecy Nahum is called "the Elkoshite." From the form of the word this cannot be a patronymic. It might indicate a family stem, but none such appears in the Hebrew lists. It may be taken as certain that it is meant to designate the prophet's native place or his residence. Unfortunately we have no reference elsewhere in the Bible to any Elkosh. The very pronunciation is uncertain. In the Septuagint it is written "Elkesite." Yet this phrase is all we have to go upon in determining the personal circumstances of the seer.

At a comparatively early period tradition located Elkosh in Galilee. Jerome tells us that he was shown as the prophet's birthplace a small village with traces of the ruins of ancient buildings, which the Jews believed to be the place of Nahum's nativity. If the concluding statement rests on Jerome's own knowledge, then there must attach to the tradition more weight

than if it depended merely on the obliging zeal of a guide. The most likely identification of the site is with El-Kauzeh, which lies a few miles south-west of Tiberias, in the vicinity of Ramah in Naphtali. The suggestion is ingenious, but devoid of any material proof, that Elkosh is to be recognised in the Capernaum of the New Testament, whose name means village of Nahum, for supposing the interpretation correct there is nothing to show that it was called after the prophet and not after another Nahum. There are some other early references to Elkosh, but they are vague and add nothing to our knowledge.

If the prophet's birthplace were, indeed, in the north, his family must have either escaped the general deportation of the inhabitants by Sargon, or else he may have been as a child among the exiles, and in that case uttered his oracle against Nineveh in the land of his banishment. On the other supposition, it is most likely that his family moved southwards, and that his prophetic activity was in Judea. A strong point is made against the whole theory of a Galilean origin by appeal to the protest of the Jews, who in Christ's time were already zealous builders of the prophets' tombs (Matt. xxiii. 29), that "out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (John vii. 52).

A conflicting tradition as to the prophet's place of abode dates back to the sixteenth century, but unhappily for its credibility no farther. At Alkosh, a considerable village on the left bank of the Tigris, two days' journey north of the ruins of Nineveh, the tomb of the prophet is shown, and to this day is reverenced by devout Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan pilgrims. But the tomb, the house in which it stands, and the whole place are destitute of any traces or marks of genuine antiquity. And in the twelfth century, according to Benjamin of Tudela, the synagogue of Nahum was in Mosul, and his tomb at Ain-Japhata, in Babylonia. Moreover, even if he did live in some part of the Assyrian realm, the fact might be stated in the title of his book, but a Hebrew prophet would hardly describe himself or be described as the native of a foreign place (compare Ezek. i. 3). So far then the historical evidence is against an Assyrian Elkosh, but it must also be allowed that the proof of a Galilean Elkosh is not convincing. We must, therefore, seek light in another direction, and resolve the geographical question into a larger and more interesting one.

3. *Local Colour.*—A writing is apt to reflect the surroundings of its author. This is especially true, if it deal not with abstract principles but with places, persons, and practical movements. Of this nature is the oracle of Nahum against Nineveh. Its structure, its address, or some one of its many details ought to betray

its origin, and prove it to have been composed either in Palestine or Assyria. The expectation is a natural one, but experiment proves it not quite satisfactory. Study of the contents and form of the book does not lead to one conclusion. Each side of the alternative is stoutly maintained by competent scholars. It is urged that Nahum must have lived in the neighbourhood of Nineveh, for that great metropolis dominates all his thought, engrosses his attention, is described with a knowledge of topography and local colour possible only to an eye-witness, intrudes into the writer's vocabulary, and interests him in its fortunes as no remote city known only by hearsay could have done. On the contrary, Judah is but cursorily mentioned, and the reference is seen to be that of a speaker far away when it is compared with the parallel allusion to Assyria of a prophet in Judæa (Zeph. ii. 13—15).

There is truth in some of this characterization, but it seems twisted to a wrong conclusion. The prophecy is indeed engrossed in Nineveh, but in the realisation of Nineveh's destruction, and in Nineveh's destruction conceived as Judæa's deliverance. The reference to Judæa is not, therefore, correctly described as a passing allusion, but is the central address of the whole impassioned vision, placed therefore in the climax of the utterance, and forming the crown and keystone of the structure. That is not what it would have been if the writer had been an exile addressing his fellow-exiles. It is the appeal of a prophet in Judæa speaking to the heart of Judæa, stirred not by the woes of his banished brethren, but by the crippling wounds and desolations of the mother country bereft of her children (i. 13—ii. 2).

If local colour is to be appealed to, we have the citation of Bashan, Carmel, and Lebanon (i. 4), and would no doubt have more Palestinian tints were Nineveh not our author's theme. There are in his book at most two or three Assyrian words, and these—we can see from other Old Testament books—such as an author in Palestine might naturally know and use in writing of Assyrian affairs. If the topographical references, the detailed touches, and the graphic realism of the delineation of the taking and destruction of Nineveh are held decisive of personal knowledge, the same conclusion would attach to the author's minute and vivid picture of the physical surroundings, material resources, military strength, and terrible overthrow of Egyptian Thebes (iii. 8—10). The truth is that the appearance of detail is due, not only here, but in other elements of the piece, not to observation, but to a powerful and picturesque imagination, operating on information concerning Nineveh possessed by all the peoples interested by conquest in the capital of their conqueror. There is, in fact,

a remarkable absence of names of localities, persons (Huzzab is erroneous, ii. 7), and events, such as would colour the composition of a writer actually on the spot. The argument is, of course, too much one of personal literary instinct to be made much of, but the trend of critical opinion is certainly against assigning to Nahum an Assyrian home and career.

4. *Contemporary History*.—The period of the prophet's activity is not specified in the superscription. It must be gleaned, as nearly as we can, from the contents of the prophecy. Till recent years our knowledge of events was not such as to permit of any one certain combination. There was, therefore, a very wide divergence of opinion as to the probable date, ranging from the beginning to the end of the seventh century. The three most respectable theories locate the composition respectively under Hezekiah (about B.C. 700), under Manasseh (about B.C. 660), under Josiah (about B.C. 630).

In the light of fresh discoveries opinion gravitates to the middle date. This conclusion might have been arrived at from a thorough study of the character of the book. Israel lies bound and helpless in the grasp of Assyria (i. 13); half of her people, the northern kingdom, has been emptied out (ii. 2); through her midst the wicked one has passed (i. 15), and Judah is left broken and despoiled (ii. 2). If the description is general, it would apply to Israel at any time subsequent to the terrible invasion of Sennacherib during the reign of Hezekiah. If it indicates a particular calamity it most probably refers to that disaster. If a later experience must be found, it is possible to fall back on the narrative in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, which speaks of a captivity of Manasseh, that must have been the act either of Esarhaddon (B.C. 680?), or of Assurbanipal (B.C. 648). Several phrases in the wording (i. 11, 12, 14, 15; ii. 13) resemble, really or seemingly, features of the narrative of Sennacherib's invasion in Kings and Isaiah. But the similarity comes far short of proving the combination, while even if this be the reference it does not follow that the passage is contemporaneous. Such a crisis of terror, permanent crippling, and national depression would live fresh and ever present in the people's mind till they were either retrieved, or by still worse calamities eclipsed.

Nothing, therefore, shuts us up to Hezekiah's age, while there is something that irresistibly demands a later era. One of the most outstanding pictures in the book is the delineation of the overthrow of No-Amon, *i.e.* Thebes on the Nile. From an early date there had been hostility between Egypt and Assyria, and such a disaster might have happened at any time, say, under Sargon or Sennacherib, to tally with the theory of early origin.

But the inscriptions have decided the matter by giving us a definite account of the capture and spoliation of Thebes by the army of Assurbanipal about B.C. 662. No doubt the great city may have been sacked at an earlier period, but coupled with other evidence we have a moral certainty that Nahum wrote subsequent to that date.

Turning now to the theory that he wrote long subsequent to this period, about the year B.C. 630, we find that the only argument for it is the prejudice, that the impulse and basis of Nahum's prediction must be found in an actual menace to the existence of Nineveh, such as did exist about that time in the hostile movements of the Medes and Babylonians, while earlier than this date the Assyrian empire was in the meridian of its might and glory. But the supposition is mistaken from first to last. If anything is manifest in Nahum's prophecy, it is that his certainty of Nineveh's overthrow is not a political forecast but a religious inspiration. It is a deduction from the eternal laws of justice and divine grace, not an inference from an historical survey of existing facts. The actual executioner is God, and there is not the faintest indication of the earthly agents. Moreover, his picture is not of a decaying Assyria that has already received its death-blow, but of an Assyria in the plenitude of its power and arrogance, gorged with the plunder of wars and the profit of the world's commerce, defiant alike of men and of God (i. 12, ii. 13—14; iii. 15—17). It is precisely that, the apparent invincibility of the heathen world power, that inspires the Hebrew prophet to his daring flight of faith. Just when sight and reason and probability are most adverse to hope, then is religion's opportunity, then is faith's hour to be certain in spite of sense, then is prophecy needed to comfort and assure the heart of God's people.

If this be the true genesis of prophecy, if this be the law of its origination and action, what season more suitable to assert the reality of the world's Divine government and to declare Nineveh's certain doom than just in the hour of its supreme triumph, when over the ruin of its great rival Egypt it stood the unchallenged mistress of the world? Either then, in connection perchance with Manasseh's disaster, or some time later, if that calamity did not fall so early, the heart of Nahum was roused to indomitable confidence in coming deliverance, his spirit was stirred with an irresistible certainty of slow but sure retribution of old wrongs, and in thoughts that glowed and words that burned he chanted the death dirge of the world's colossal oppressor. With all but complete assurance we may place Nahum about the middle of the seventh century. Earlier we have no right to locate him, not indeed any moral or religious inducement. Later he could

hardly have written our prophecy, for by the time of Nineveh's last struggles Assyria had ceased to be an object of either menace or hatred to Judea.

5. *Character of the Book.*—The oracle of Nahum is one continuous utterance, not to be broken into separate elements, but the embodiment of a single inspiration, forceful, rounded, and complete. Every attempt to dismember it is a failure. Its unity and genuineness are acknowledged on all hands. Only the first part of the superscription has been questioned. But there is nothing unnatural in the title assigning, correctly, first the subject of the prophecy, and then its author. The piece is of the nature of a highly poetical and imaginative composition, is indeed an inspired vision. Clearly cut divisions can hardly be marked out, but it is probable that eight stages may be detected in the stately march of the seer's conception.

Over against the Assyrian power with its gigantic pagan might he sees God, the vindicator of right, the avenger of wrong, the final judge of all human issues. Slow to strike, because He is so strong, He is nevertheless relentlessly just. He wields the powers of the air, commands the waters, controls the soil, makes the solid earth tremble, and rules among men omnipotent, relentless (i. 2—6). This God, faithful to friends, fearful to foes, annihilating the most formidable resistance, has been thwarted and defied by Assyria, and therefore will utterly destroy her (i. 7—12). Judah, so long oppressed, shall be set free by the Divine overthrow of the Assyrian, and already may rejoice in the happy release, for sure alike are the downfall of the foe and the restoration of crippled Israel (i. 13; ii. 2). The taking of the city is now depicted before our eyes, with lightning-like rapidity, in a series of vivid pictures of the muster of the contending forces, the assault, the sudden collapse of the defences, the seizure of the palace, the capture and flight of the inhabitants (ii. 3—8). Next comes the sack and pillage of the wealthy city, the emptiness and sickening desolation, the weird contrast with the time when it was like a great lion's den gorged with the plunder of its devastating armies, for God has risen against her and made an utter end of her might, her wealth, and her empire, that were gathered and built up out of bloodshed and violence unending (ii. 9; iii. 1).

Once again the seer calls up in living images the din and terror of the conflict, and the fatal completeness of the defeat, and figuring the heartless capital as a cruel courtezan, that has devoured the fortunes and lives of the nations, he exults in the terrible humiliation of her haughtiness, and the contumely and implied shame of her overthrow (iii. 2—7). By the example of her own destruction of mighty Thebes, the royal residence of her

great rival Egypt, he asserts the possibility of the catastrophe, and founds its certainty on her impotence in the hour of need, the fall of her fortresses, the demoralisation of her soldiers, and the failure and destruction of her last defences (iii. 8—13). Finally he taunts her with her helplessness, pictures the destruction of her commerce, the scattering of her potentates, the dispersion of her populace, and the relief and rejoicing that her fall will create in all nations, for wide as the world has been the curse of her oppression (iii. 14—19).

6. *Literary and Religious Features.*—Among the prophetic writers of the Old Testament Nahum, brief as his book is, claims high rank in respect of literary excellence. By general consent he is counted a master of Hebrew style. His vocabulary includes some peculiar words and exceptional forms. But what has sometimes been reckoned Galilean provincialism or the betrayal of a late or deteriorating style, is more probably the result of defective copying. Identities of phrase and idea may be traced between his book and several other prophetic writers, but this, when used to determine age or originality in favour of one author rather than another, is apt to prove a two-edged sword. For fiery vigour, glowing colour, dramatic impressiveness, wealth of imagination, and pictorial imagery, Nahum stands pre-eminent. He is, as it were, hurried away by his own passion, and has not time to do more than sketch his vividly conceived pictures in a few daring strokes. Perhaps all the more on that account his delineation seems to actually live and move and make itself heard with the real clash of arms, and hurry of panic-stricken feet, and the awful hush of ruin and desolation.

As to the prophet's rank in the series of inspired teachers, it is suggested that his message is meagre, and his conceptions narrow. He has nothing to say about Israel's Messianic character and future. He has no rebuke for her sinfulness and unworthiness. His soul is consumed with unreasoning indignation against Assyria, and he is devoid of that lofty conception of the world's government which enabled earlier prophets to recognise in Assyria Jehovah's scourge for His people's stubbornness and the chastening rod of His gracious discipline. In contrast to that large and religious interpretation of providence, Nahum appears as the representative of a retrogression into narrow, national particularism. Now it is to be admitted that the form of Nahum's oracle lends itself to this misreading, but the spirit and aim of the prophet ought to have prevented it. Besides the wrong of Israel, more than once in his short utterance he presents Assyria as the oppressor of mankind, whose avenger Jehovah is (iii. 4, 7, 19). Nor even in the contemplation of his own people's injuries is the

prophet's zeal national and vindictive. It is not revenge but righteousness that demands the transgressor's downfall. It is not Israel's pride that is at stake but God's honour, not the redemption of his people but the vindication of his God that is in question. With Nahum Nineveh's punishment is the guarantee of the world's Divine government, and his impassioned declaration of its downfall is the measure not of his hostility to it but of the struggle and triumph of his faith in God and in God's kingdom. That being the single and simple issue present to his mind, he naturally does not even touch that aspect of the Assyrian enigma which explains its evil power over God's people and the world by their sinful failure to be what God would have had them be for their own happiness and humanity's good.

Thus his oracle is essentially though not superficially Messianic. How could it be otherwise with a prophet who has a conception of God so morally and spiritually majestic? For the rest it is needless to remark that the faith of Nahum was not falsified. Improbable as it seemed to earthly reason in the height of Assyria's prosperity, that the great empire should within half a century crumble to pieces, and that the splendid capital with its titanic military strength and its vast commerce, standing as it did on the great highway between east and west, should be not merely deprived of its supremacy, but captured and destroyed and obliterated by fire and water and time, till the very place of it was forgotten, this—mad as it looked when Nahum foretold it—has in the complete fulness of its terror come true, and may be read not only in the pages of history, but still more graphically in the calcined, weather-worn relics of Nineveh's long vanished greatness, that have been laid bare in the recently discovered and partially disinterred ruins of the ancient Assyrian capital.

HABAKKUK.

1. *Name and Identity.*—The name of Habakkuk is peculiar in form, and is borne by no other person in the Old Testament. The question has been raised whether it is originally a personal or a symbolical designation. Probably it is derived from a root meaning *to embrace*, and is variously interpreted to signify *the beloved one*, or *the wrestler*, or *the comforter*. Taking the last suggestion, Luther finds on it a finely felt characterization, which admirably expresses the spirit of the prophet's message, if not the etymology of the name. What Habakkuk does in his prophecy is, he says, “to caress his people and take them in his arms; that is to say, he comforts and cheers them, as one caresses a poor weeping child or fellow-creature, that it may be hushed and contented, because it shall soon, if God will, be better.” Recently the name of the seer has been connected in its Greek form with an Assyrian word *hambakuku*, the name of a plant. In the Septuagint Habakkuk is written Ambakum, a form derived from a Hebrew original pronounced Habbakuk, the double b resolving itself into mb, and the harsh final k being changed by assonance into m. Similar changes appear in Bab-el-mandel for Bab-el-mandeb, and, perhaps, in Beelzebul for Beelzebub.

If our conjectures about the name are somewhat uncertain, it is unfortunate that our information about the prophet's person is still more vague. In the superscription of the book there is no recital of his ancestry, such as we have in the case of Zephaniah, not even a patronymic or reference to his birthplace, and, worst of all, no statement of the period when he emitted his prophecy. On the other hand, he is formally designated *the prophet* (i. 1), as is also done in the titles to the books of Haggai and Zechariah. Though the word is used in the New Testament with a wider range of application, it is nowhere in the Old Testament appended to the name of any one whose proper function and profession was not strictly the prophetic office.

Therefore, although we have only one short composition from Habakkuk, and that apparently composed to be read, not orally delivered, we may safely think of the author as one whose life was devoted to the ministry of prophecy. The concluding division of his book is a poem, provided with metrical or musical directions and notes, exactly similar to those used in the Psalter, and clearly indicating that the piece was set to be sung with musical accompaniment in the Temple worship. From the phrase, *on my stringed instruments*, used in the terminal instruction (iii. 19), it is held that he was a Levite, and occupied some office in connection with the service of praise. This belief finds either a dubious confirmation, or more likely an ancient echo, in the statement inserted in the superscription of the story of Bel and the Dragon in the version of the Septuagint in Origen's "Tetrapla," that Habakkuk was "the son of Joshua, of the tribe of Levi." It is very far from certain that the Temple choir and orchestra consisted of Levites alone, and eminently unlikely at this early date.

A very similar statement terminates the poem ascribed to Hezekiah (Isa. xxxviii. 20) on occasion of his miraculous recovery from a sickness that seemed to be unto death. Moreover, the acknowledged state of the Hebrew text suggests hesitation in building large inferences on such a small basis as the letter which represents the pronoun. Nor would dogmatism be prudent in view of the possibility that the musical setting of this magnificent poem does not date back to its first publication, but was the outcome of a later and liturgical desire to make devotional use of an expression of faith and hope men would not willingly let die, or leave unused in times of national need. Besides these vague possibilities, there is no further biographical matter to be gleaned in the pages of the prophecy. Tradition, Jewish and Christian, has plenty to tell us, but it is either, for the most part, allegory and devout fancy, or baseless and sometimes manifestly false legend. For instance, he was employed to convey food in a miraculous fashion to Daniel in the lions' den. He was son of the lady of Shunem, to whom Elisha promised that she should *embrace* a son (2 Kings iv. 16); or, again, the watchman set (Isa. xxi. 6) to look out for tokens of the fall of Babylon. He was born at Bethzocher, removed before the destruction of Jerusalem to Ostracine, died two years prior to the return of the exiles, and was buried at Keilah, in Judah, or, according to another tradition, at Chukkok, in Naphtali. The human mind does not willingly accept the principle, that, where we have not knowledge, the fact of ignorance is better than the pretence of information.

2. *Date.*—The date of the prophecy cannot be fixed with precision. Neither in the book, nor anywhere else in the Old Testament, have we any statement on the point, nor any historical allusion sufficiently detailed to enable us to draw a positive conclusion. But while minute definition is out of the question, we can say with much certainty that the book belongs to the closing decades of the seventh century, which witnessed the decline and fall of the Assyrian empire. For in its pages Nineveh has vanished and Babylon takes possession of the stage. Indeed we may almost venture to affirm that the event which dominates the thought and emotion of the book is precisely the imposing spectacle of the transference of the world's sovereignty from the capital on the Tigris to the mighty city of the Euphrates. The problem of the prophecy is the part to be played in the fortunes of mankind, and especially the influence to be exerted on Israel's career, by this new, terrible, and unexpected arbiter of human destiny. In the absence of indisputable statements, the book has had dates assigned to it ranging over more than a century, but reasonable conjectures concentrate themselves within the period indicated.

Three theories hold the field at the present moment, though the issue promises to lie between the second and third. The book belongs either to the close of Manasseh's reign (B.C. 650—640), or to the time of Josiah's great reform (B.C. 630—620), or to the early years of Jehoiakim (B.C. 608—600). To decide between these rival opinions quite a number of considerations are adduced, of which many are indecisive, a few possess some weight, but none is quite conclusive. Jewish tradition, which assigns the book to the age of Manasseh, amounts to nothing. Neither does its place in the canon determine anything. The fact that the prophecy terminates in a hymn, prepared and arranged to be rendered musically in the Temple worship, is held to exclude the times of Manasseh and Jehoiakim, and to indicate the era of Josiah's reformation. But, not to rest upon the reform ascribed to Manasseh (2 Chron. xxxiii. 15—16), the worship of Jehovah, though corrupted, was not abolished in either period, and, as has already been pointed out, the musical setting of Habakkuk's poem is hardly a satisfactory basis for argument about the author's age, any more than about his personal circumstances. A line of proof has been led, with a good deal of confidence, founded on certain similarities of idea and wording between Habakkuk and other prophets. The chief passages adduced are these. It is argued that Hab. ii. 20 is the model of Zeph. i. 7, and that Jer. iv. 13, v. 6, are echoes of Hab. i. 8. Now these passages, of which Habakkuk is held to be the original,

belong to the prophecies promulgated during the days of Josiah, in all likelihood in the opening years of his reform. This would seem to exclude the Jehoiakim date, and between the two earlier it would rather favour the Manasseh theory, in whose time, moreover, we are told that prophets pronounced just such oracles of evil as this (2 Kings xxi. 10—15).

But of late years, reasoning based on assumed literary relationship has been gravely discredited, and in the present case the evidence is slight and far from sufficient to establish either priority, or the bare fact of actual indebtedness, while if Manasseh's age had its harbingers of doom, there were certainly as many in the later decades of this fateful century (Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Hulda, &c.). Against a very early date it is urged, that by his use of the phrase *in your days* (i. 5), the prophet fixes the Chaldean invasion within the lifetime of his own generation, and as he addresses not the infants but the adults of his time, that allows us an interval of not more than twenty or thirty years between prediction and fulfilment. That this is a fair estimate seems clear from passages of a similar description (Joel i. 2; Jer. xvi. 9; Ezek. xii. 25). The time of Manasseh is, therefore, put out of the question, and we must date our prophecy not earlier than B.C. 630. Fault can hardly be found fairly with this logic by those whose theory of prophecy permits them to reason from the historical fulfilment back to the announcement. But apart from definitely timed predictions, such a line of reasoning seems at least precarious in the light of ascertained facts, and in view of the subordinate place expressly assigned to the element of time in the delivery of prophecy (1 Peter i. 11).

At the same time, if the argument is questionable in form, the conclusion is probably sound. Certainly the prophet's use of the phrase proves that he felt the disaster of Judaea imminent, as he equally clearly presents the downfall of Babylon in the remote future (ii. 3). A clue might have been hoped for from the picture of Judah's condition in i. 2—4. If the violence, lawlessness, and paralysis of justice refer, as some hold, not without plausible grounds (compare i. 13; ii. 4, 8, 17), to injuries inflicted by the Chaldeans, then clearly chapters ii. and iii. depict accomplished facts, and we must date our prophecy in the time of Jehoiakim, and late in his reign rather than early. But the majority of interpreters are agreed that the verses in question depict internal corruptions, not external injuries, and that all that follows is future, is indeed the punitive sequel of present sin.

This is in all likelihood the true scope of the passage, and it deprives it of any defining value, for the dark picture is applicable to periods in the reigns of each of the three monarchs in

question. It does, perchance, tell against the second reformed section of Josiah's reign, but it would be quite compatible with the long years of bitter and only half-successful struggle to introduce and establish the royal programme of religious reform and rectification of old abuses. The most significant indication of date is the fashion in which Habakkuk presents the Chaldeans as a new and unfamiliar power on the stage of western history (i. 5—11). His graphic portrait may of course be thrown into its peculiar form solely for artistic reasons, but the impression remains that it reflects an actual novelty of the people portrayed. That being so, we must not date our book later than the opening of Jehoiakim's reign. The prophet further speaks of the Chaldean tide of conquest as a *thing marvellous, unexpected, and hardly to be believed.*

We must take care not to push the wording of prophetic oratory too far, and it is, therefore, hardly a legitimate inference to count this language as conclusive against the later date. It may be admitted that it is most perfectly explicable, if we have to do with the era of Josiah's reform, but it might quite well be used at any time prior to the great battle of Carchemish. During the years of Assyria's decline under the attacks of the Medes and Chaldeans, its hold on the West had relaxed, and Judea had begun to breathe freely, to recover materially, and to dream of freedom. But Egypt also had meantime revived and begun to dream of empire. Thus at the time when Nineveh fell, not Babylon, but Egypt was Judæa's dread, as it marched northwards to attack its old enemy Assyria (2 Kings xxiii 29). Hence the disastrous interference of Josiah, and the defeat of Megiddo. On, therefore, to the crushing defeat of Egypt by the Chaldeans at Carchemish (B.C. 605), it must have appeared to Judæa that the empire of the world belonged to the near and dreaded Colossus of the West, and not to the new unproved power in the far East. The language of Habakkuk may have been naturally employed at any time up to that decisive conflict, but not subsequent to it, for that would be to blindly treat a flight of inspired imagination as if it were a cold, artificial piece of political logic. The prophecy of Habakkuk is an intuition, not an argument; an impassioned achievement of religious faith, not a statesman's calculated forecast.

We are thus left uncertain between the dates of Josiah's reform and Jehoiakim's accession to the throne. A decision on external grounds seems to be impossible, but a personal verdict may be reached according to the impression we form of the dominant mood and ultimate motive of the book. If we detect in it the impatient grief of a noble reform delayed, foiled, or at

least paralysed by obdurate resistance, driving the prophet in despair to look for an external, punitive, Divine solution, then we shall picture to ourselves the prophecy born out of the aspirations, struggles, and disappointments of Josiah's early attempts at reformation. If, on the contrary, we feel ourselves in contact with the disheartenment of a man who looks back at the ruins of a brief but promising period of internal reform and national prosperity, and looks forward with dismay to a future of darker threatening than ever before, and in his extremity cries to God for light in the great darkness, we shall in that case place Habakkuk among the faithful hearts whose fate it was to behold the bright promise of Josiah's reign quenched in the gloom of his untimely death, and to witness the reversal by Jehoiakim of all his righteous and beneficent reforms. Between these poles opinions will continue to oscillate, but that somewhere within their limits (B.C. 630—600) fall the activity and authorship of Habakkuk, is a conviction that promises to secure the common consent of modern scholarship.

3. *Analysis of Contents.*—An unusually clear and continuous line of thought may be discerned running through this prophecy. There are three chief divisions. We have, first, the Divine design to raise up the Chaldean empire as a scourge for men's sins (i.); second, its ultimate overthrow and replacement by God's kingdom (ii.); third, the certainty of this happy issue in the grandeur of the Divine nature (iii.). These ruling ideas are worked out in the following fashion. The seer, confronted by the spectacle of violence, corruption, and injustice, obdurate and incurable, demands almost passionately the Divine intervention (i. 1—4). God answers by announcing speedy chastisement in the Chaldean career of conquest, rude, resistless, unmerciful, and finally sacrilegious (i. 5—11). Awed and sadly the prophet accepts the necessity of the Chaldean discipline, but his sense of the repugnance between God's holy nature and the brutality of the scourge He employs convinces him instinctively that Babylonian conquest is not God's last word in the world's story, and so he asks for further light (i. 12—17).

Waiting thus on Divine guidance he receives and is ordered to record a vision of the developments of time (ii. 1—3). Doubt as to the issue is destroyed in the assurance that the future belongs to the righteous who possess God in living faith, not to the godless tyranny which, unrestrained by principle, shall be driven by lust of conquest, as by love of drink, to excess that breeds its own ruin. This law of history is expanded in five woes, of which the first shows how oppression creates insurrection, the second how ill-gotten gains turn against its owner, the

third enunciates the futility of all godless civilisation, the fourth the demoralising effect on tyrants of an immoral rule, and the last finds the root of the ruin in the impossibility of building up an abiding social order on aught save the knowledge and obedience of the living God (ii. 4—20). This course of thought has brought the seer to recognise in the nature of God the final solution of all problems, and has stirred his spirit to an intense realisation of the Divine presence in all human affairs past, present, future. He beholds God, as in the days of old, emerging from the world unseen, marching gloriously through the earth, bending nature, nations, history to His majestic designs, righting all wrongs, overturning every oppression, annihilating the most formidable resistance, and triumphantly establishing his kingdom on earth. In the splendour of that certainty of faith the prophet can possess his soul in patience, and already, even amid the collapse of all earthly props and solaces, he will rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of his salvation (iii. 1—19).

4. *Literary and Ethical Character.*—The Book of Habakkuk is beyond most prophecies a work of art, finely planned and exquisitely articulated, in which every part is organically connected with the rest, and has its proper place in the natural and vital progression of thought and emotion. The genuineness has scarcely been questioned, though quite recently an attempt has been made to detach the last four woes and the poem, and to ascribe these to post-Exilic times. The intimate unity of the book has not, however, been so universally recognised. Various sections of it have been assigned to various points in the prophet's career. The motive has been the exigency of theory of date, and it has not been perceived that what made dismemberment easy should have made it impossible to a true critical instinct, to wit, that perfect articulation and finish of individual part which is the most absolute proof of organic unity in the whole. In truth, the very part that superficially seems most detached and separable—the terminal poem—is most vitally connected and essential. For the last words of the woe on Babylon anticipate just such a theophany as is presented in the poem, and that gathers up in itself precisely the two unharmonized notes in the prophecy—the perplexed pain at the thought of Israel's renewed humiliation, the comforting reassurance of her enemy's ultimate overthrow, takes them up, gives them unrivalled emotional expression, hushes them in the overmastering conception of God's majestic sovereignty of history, and so blends their harmonies and discords in the unison of an awed but absolute reliance in the strength and goodness of Jehovah.

The style is distinguished by graphic imagery, dramatic pre-

sentation, vivid description, rare lyrical beauty, and sublime conception. The combination of minute artistic workmanship with undiminished power and freshness is specially notable in the poem and in the rhythmic structure of the woes in the second chapter. There are several peculiar words, and the text is probably defective in a few passages, particularly in the psalm. It is natural to assume that the prophecy was prepared not for oral delivery but for written publication (ii. 2). Indeed it is so subjective in tone, and has such affinity with psalms of spiritual conflict, such as the seventy-third, that one is tempted to doubt whether it was in its initiation planned for the nation, and is not rather the unrestrained utterance of a personal soul-struggle for faith and hope in a time of heart-breaking darkness.

The prophetic contents of the book hardly need comment. Contrary to human expectation Jerusalem did fall before Babylon, and later on that mighty empire succumbed through the operation of those eternal laws of retribution and progress discerned by our prophet. While there is no Messianic reference in a narrow sense, in the truest and deepest sense the whole foundation of the thought of the prophecy is Messianic. The question at stake in the world's drama presented on its stage is the future of the kingdom of God upon earth, and the denouement is that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (ii. 14). The theological and religious value of the piece is very great. Light is thrown on the methods of prophetic revelation (ii. 1, 2); the ultimate laws of political and social evolution (ii. 4—20); the moral and religious aspect of secular affairs (i. 12). Indeed the book is full of large conceptions of history, fine philosophical reasoning, subtle ethical analysis, and a superb faith in God and righteousness.

Subject to the limitations of his place in human progress and the development of revelation, this prophet may claim to be the apostle of the great ultimate fact of faith, and of its sovereign part in the evolution of human destiny (ii. 4). This key-note, alike of his prophecy and of his personal experience, has been taken up and expanded in the well-known New Testament adaptation, reached its full rights at the Reformation, and in the creeds and life of evangelical Christendom will doubtless continue to be illustrated in ever wider issues on to the world's end.

ZEPHANIAH.

1. *Authorship.*—The name of Zephaniah has a special aptness in relation to his message and office, but the appellation is by no means peculiar to the prophet. It occurs of several other personages in the Old Testament (2 Kings xxv. 18; Jer. xxi. 1, &c.; Zech. vi. 10; 1 Chron. vi. 36). In the Septuagint it appears as Sophonias. The word is a compound of the Divine name, and a root meaning *to hide*, and particularly with the effect of sheltering or preserving the object hidden. It is not unreasonable to suspect a reference to the suggestion of his name in the prophet's use of the phrase, “Ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger” (ii. 3). Jerome suggests an alternative interpretation, resting on another root, which throws into relief the prophet's function as a watchman or searcher into the purposes of Providence. The previous explanation is the more probable.

Of the man we know little beyond his date and his pedigree, of which the latter is given at considerable length in the superscription of his book. This is unusual. In the case of Zechariah the title goes back to the grandfather, but the lineage of Zephaniah is traced to the fourth ancestor. He is the “son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah” (i. 1). The reason of this exceptional fulness can hardly be to distinguish him from a contemporary priest Zephaniah, frequently mentioned by Jeremiah. It is more likely that the prophet's lineage was a distinguished one, and that the recital proceeds as far as and stops in Hezekiah, because of the crowning lustre of this ancestor. The interval is short, but not too short to allow of the ancestor in question being King Hezekiah, and it is natural to find in this the motive of the lengthy pedigree. But the name was probably not uncommon. So far as we know the king had no sons save Manasseh. And surely in this list he would be described as “king” or “king of Judah,” for the fact of the designation following another name in close proximity does not account for its absence, since a Hebrew writer would not consider the repetition a literary blemish.

The point is not one for dogmatic assertion, and we must remain in unwilling uncertainty whether in Zephaniah we have or have not a prophet of the blood royal and of the seed of David. Tradition represents him as of Mount Sarabatha, of the tribe of Simeon, and his grave is assigned to Geba in Lebanon. An apocryphal book circulated in the early Church under his name. Unfortunately neither the historical books of the Old Testament nor his own prophecy furnish any biographical details. All we can assume from his writing with moral certainty is that he prophesied, wrote, and published his book in Jerusalem.

2. *Date*.—The title, which is singularly full and reliable, places the prophet's activity “in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah” (i. 1). The reign of Josiah was a long one, extending from b.c. 640 to 608. There is nothing in the book to justify the faintest suspicion that it does not belong to this period. Neither is there, unhappily, anything that enables us with certainty to define the particular portion of these thirty years that witnessed the publication of Zephaniah's prophecy. The conception of the oracle carries with it a certain universality that excludes concrete treatment and historical allusion. The great judgment threatening the world, which is the writer's theme, is indeed embodied in the imagery of war and conquest (i. 13, 16; ii. 12; iii. 15), but there is nowhere any delineation of the Divinely designated scourge, nor passing hint that might mark a definite personality. This striking vagueness means either that the prophet spoke in a moment of panic in the presence of a palpable menace of invasion, or that the plan of his oracle made him deliberately throw the earthly minister of vengeance into the background, that the picture might be filled with the presence of the Divine Judge Himself.

If the prophecy were prompted by an actually impending danger, it cannot have been Assyria or Egypt, since both are represented as sufferers. The instrument of retribution must have been the new Chaldean power, which was slowly but surely rising on the decay of Assyria during Josiah's reign, or else the terrifying irruption into Asia and Palestine of the Scythian hordes, which took place between b.c. 630—620, and is asserted to be the peril that lends a lurid colouring to the early prophecies of Jeremiah. In view of the studied indefiniteness of Zephaniah's drafting, there is no need to find the personal instigation to his prophecy in any single one of contemporary causes of anxiety and bodeful anticipation. The ultimate inspiration of his action lies deeper, and is not to be sought in the realm of sense, while the apocalyptic character of his message is not the

reflex of an age of panic, but is rather the proper outcome of the mental and moral idiosyncrasy of the messenger.

The prediction of the destruction of Nineveh (ii. 13—15) does not help us to a more definite date, for it is probable that the Assyrian capital did not fall in B.C. 625, but about the close of Josiah's reign. Perhaps the general manner of the reference suggests that the city was then not actually threatened, while the absence of rancour, in contrast with the warm denunciation of Moab and Ammon (ii. 8—10), breathes of the period, subsequent to the era of Nahum, when the cruel grip of Assyria on Palestine had become relaxed. There are many similarities of thought and expression between Zephaniah and the early prophecies of Jeremiah, who began his career in the thirteenth year of Josiah, but to determine the precise relation between them is an enterprise too precarious to inspire any confidence in the result. According to the historical books the reign of Josiah was marked by one great outstanding event. The reformation of religion, carried out by the king, divided his reign into two periods strongly contrasted. Such, however, is the complexion of Zephaniah's book, that we can discern no direct reference to this epoch-making movement, nor can we show that the prophecy bears in an unmistakable manner the characteristic colour of one or other of these two periods.

The one safe inference might seem to be, that the book was not produced in the excitement of the reformation (B.C. 622), but either considerably before or after. In other words, it belongs to the period of preparation, and is a threatening summons to amendment (ii. 1—3), or it pertains to the era of reaction, and is faith's refuge from despair in face of the manifest failure of all hope of adequate reform (iii. 1—10). This narrowing of the issue has not controlled critics, so that we have the book assigned to various points during the king's rule, *e.g.* the beginning of his reign, the commencement of the reform, soon after that event, and towards the close of his life. It is enough to notice the arguments only so far as they tend to place the work prior to or posterior to the reform.

3. *Description of the Period.*—In the foreground of the prophet's picture of his age, we are confronted with a luxuriant growth of idolatry, corrupt worship, indifference, violence, and injustice (i. 4—13; iii. 1—7), that seems to clash with the description in Kings of the purged and justly governed people after B.C. 622, and tallies with Jeremiah's pictures of unreformed Israel, when he began to prophesy. But both from Kings, Jeremiah, and the subsequent history, we know that these evils were never quite eradicated, quickly sprang up again, and persisted on to

the fall of Jerusalem. That the corruption described is not that which existed previous to the beginning of the king's reforming campaign is thought to be indicated by Zephaniah's use of the expression, *I will cut off the remnant of Baal* (i. 4). The phrase, however, comparing it with the parallel idiom, *and the name of the Chemarim*, is more probably intended to express utter extermination, and therefore decides nothing.

Equally inconclusive is the contention that the reference to the priests doing violence to the law (iii. 4) must be explained by the discovery of the book of the law (2 Kings xxii.), and proves our prophecy subsequent to the reform. The mention of *the king's sons* among classes of the community on whom the judgment shall fall, if it necessarily means Josiah's children and involves public wrong on their part, would compel us to date the prophecy late, for in B.C. 622 the oldest was but twelve years of age, and could hardly even then be personally participant in national guilt. But conceivably the author's purpose is to point not to the victims' ill desert, but to the comprehensiveness of the judgment. Moreover, the reference is in all likelihood a general designation of all the princes of the blood royal (2 Kings xi. 2; 2 Chron. xxii. 11) attached to the court, or resident in Jerusalem. The point may afford a slight presumption in favour of the later date, but that is the utmost that can be said of it, and indeed of every other consideration that has been put forward.

In this absence of material evidence, we must be content with the larger era named in the title. Or the reader must decide for himself the narrower issue formulated above by the impression made on his mind as to the nature of the informing spirit and tone of the prophecy. If the prophecy sound to his ear like a stern trumpet call, meant to terrify the party of resistance and rouse the party of reform, he will locate it in the beginning of Josiah's reign. If it stir with the enthusiasm of a great movement in operation, if it reflect the likeness of a society corrupt but bettering, then he will date it during the reform. If it breathe despair of the nation and contemplate only the salvation of a remnant (ii. 3, 7, &c.), if it betray the disappointment of fondly cherished hopes (iii. 2, 7) and the abandonment of all faith in the present (iii. 8), then we shall recognise one of those prophetic voices (2 Kings xxiii. 26, 27) that in the evening of Josiah's reign proclaimed the inadequacy of his reform, or of any reform, to reverse the downward course of Israel's fortunes, and so sadly but trustfully turned their eyes to the future and to God.

4. *Genuineness.*—The genuineness of the book has scarcely been questioned, and the unity of the piece is generally admitted.

A few scholars propose to divide it into two or three oracles emitted at different times, but the composition is evidently an organic whole, put together on a single occasion, though of course it may sum up the teaching of a protracted ministry. Sharply severed divisions are not to be distinguished in the structure, but there seems to be a natural and progressive unfolding of the writer's thoughts. His theme is nothing less than the consummation of the world's history. He develops it in three stages. There is, first, the great judgment upon sin (chap. i.); second, the salvation of a faithful remnant amid the crash of nations (chap. ii.); third, the completion of judgment and restoration of God's kingdom upon earth (chap. iii.). The prophet perceives the imminent end of the present age of human sin and divine patience; final judgment is decreed, it falls with destructive force on all classes of religious offenders in Jerusalem (i. 2—7). Every form of sin in every quarter—luxury, violence, dishonesty, indifference—shall be reached, and receive inevitable retribution (i. 8—13). For near is the great day of judgment, terrible, resistless, not to be bought off, universal, and final (i. 14—18). Nevertheless repentance, sincere recourse to God, meekness, and righteousness are possible, and shall secure for the faithful a safe hiding-place in the coming judgment (ii. 1—3). Philistia desolated, depopulated, falls to the possession of the loyal remnant of God's people (ii. 4—7). Moab and Ammon, who rejoiced in Israel's calamity, shall be brought to ruin and inherited by the faithful, whose God they defied, but who now makes an end of all false gods, and conquers to Himself the worship of the world (ii. 8—11). In the distant west Ethiopia shall be devastated with the sword, and in the far east Nineveh the proud, the defiant mistress of the world, shall be reduced to utter desolation (ii. 12—15). Jerusalem, persistently disobedient, spite of Divine faithfulness and discipline, remains unashamed, obdurate, and impenitent (iii. 1—5). Judgments on other peoples, meant to warn her, proving futile, force on the advent of the final judgment, which in God's inscrutable mercy issues in the regeneration of the peoples and the restoration of Israel (iii. 6—10). Israel humbled, purged, sanctified, shall rejoice over her deliverance, God's presence in her midst, and her perpetual security (iii. 11—15). Happy and strong is this renewed Israel, with God joying in her love regained, completing her restoration, and fulfilling her destiny of world-wide goodness and glory (iii. 16—20).

5. *Style and Theme.*—The prophecy of Zephaniah is peculiar in style, matter, and spirit. Consequently the book has hardly received due appreciation at the hands of readers or commen-

tators. The composition is said to lack originality, and the writer is accused of leaning too much on his predecessors. The criticism is superficially correct, but the judgment is not sympathetic enough to bring out the truth. So far as the observation is justified by facts, it is due to this, that Zephaniah, in an abstract fashion, picks out and enforces just the two or three central dogmas of all prophecy, and so wakes echoes on every hand, not only with precursors, however, but equally with successors. Certainly his language exhibits a remarkable number of reminiscences of earlier writers, but probably an exaggerated estimate of the amount has gone abroad, and in some cases the drift of criticism tends to prove him not the copier but the model (e.g. i. 7, compared with Hab. ii. 10; Joel i. 15; Is. xxxiv. 6; Is. xiii. 3).

For the rest his style has not the lyrical elevation, the speaking imagery, the impassioned power of some of his colleagues, but he is a thinker of another mould, and his style has the qualities proper to his thought. He is systematic, massive, comprehensive; abstract and dogmatic in execution rather than concrete and historical; nevertheless clear and flowing in expression, forcible and weighty in statement, and full of a restrained but strong moral heat and religious ardour.

His theme appears to be judgment, but on closer inspection that is seen to be but a means to the real end and goal of the prophet's hopes, to wit, the creation of the kingdom of God among men. The judgment is, therefore, conceived not as an outburst of Divine anger, not as mere retribution on sin, but as a purging and remedial process destined to issue in redemption. Traces of Old Testament limitation of idea there are throughout, but the prophet's conception should win our admiration for its large-hearted comprehensiveness. As all nations are included in the judgment, so all peoples are embraced in the regeneration. If the heavenly kingdom has as its centre Zion and its kernel Israel, nevertheless its citizenship covers mankind, and its circumference is wide as the world. Preliminary fulfilments of the prophet's predictions history speedily furnished, but the vision he saw and the truths he taught will not be exhausted till God's government of men in its twofold aspect of judgment and of mercy be complete.

HAGGAI.

1. *Personal Traditions.*—The series of minor propnets is closed by a group of three post-Exilic writers, of whom the first in order and the earliest in actual date is Haggai. The appellation is peculiar to the prophet, though it is very closely akin to the names Haggi (Gen. xlvi. 16; Num. xxvi. 15) and Haggiah (1 Chron. vi. 30). It is derived from a root descriptive of excited or rapid movement, such as dancing, which came to be specially used of the celebration of religious festivals. If it is not an abbreviation, then this particular formation bears the meaning *festal*, and may have been attached to a child born on the anniversary of some great religious feast. It is less likely to be connected with the cheering character of Haggai's message. A very probable suggestion, on the other hand, is that the name is a contraction of Hagariah (*Jehovah girdeth*), as the Hebrew of Zacchæus is of Zechariah. In the Book of Ezra Haggai is mentioned along with Zechariah, as the prophets who stirred the people to the rebuilding of the temple; and his name occurs in the Apocrypha under the form Aggeus.

The title of his book describes him simply as Haggai the prophet, without name of father, statement of birthplace, or any other detail. In this absence of information, founding probably on the phrase *the Lord's messenger* (i. 13, compared with Mal. iii. 1; ii. 7), devout imagination early suggested that Haggai and Malachi, together with John the Baptist, were not ordinary men, but angels in human form. Tradition, both Jewish and Christian, has much to tell of our prophet. According to the Talmud it was he who indicated the site of the former altar amid the temple ruins, who readjusted the orders of the priesthood, who gave permission for the law to be written in the Assyrian script, &c. Christian writers record that he was born in Babylon, went as a young man to Jerusalem, and was buried by the tombs of the priests.

It is vain to attempt to extract anything reliable from such

sources, and we are relegated to conjectures, more or less probable, based on the contents of his prophecy. From that we should conclude that he was certainly one of the exiles who returned under the decree of Cyrus; that he was possibly a priest, and probably a very old man, who had passed through the destruction of Jerusalem, survived the Exile, and played an important part in the Restoration. His advanced age is inferred, fancifully perhaps, from his literary style, but more forcibly from the personal turn given to his appeal to those who had seen the first Temple, from the very brief duration (four months) of his recorded activity, and from the fact that two years later his (younger?) contemporary Zechariah appears as chief of the prophets in Jerusalem.

On the ground of stylistic affinities, along with other circumstances, Haggai has been suggested as the author of some of the older portions of the Book of Ezra. In the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate his name, in association with that of Zechariah, is found in the superscriptions of certain psalms (notably the psalms numbered cxxxviii., cxlv.—cxlix. in the English Psalter), but the ascription varies, and is wanting in some MSS., and probably means merely that in certain quarters these psalms were associated with the writings, or the devotional use of the writings, of these prophets.

2. *Date and Character of the Period.*—The recorded prophetic action of Haggai occurred in the second year (B.C. 520) of Darius, son of Hystaspes, who must be clearly distinguished from Darius Nothus, whose reign fell a whole century later. Some sixteen years before, the return from Exile had taken place (B.C. 536), and, according to the traditional interpretation of the difficult narrative found in the Book of Ezra, the foundation of the new temple was laid early in the following year. Little progress was made with the building ere the work had to be abandoned, owing to the intrigues of jealous neighbours at the imperial court. An altar had, indeed, been at once inaugurated and the routine of sacrificial worship established, but the temple edifice was left untouched during the reigns of Cyrus, Cambyses, and the usurper Pseudo-Smerdis. It is, indeed, even a question whether the ruins had been at this early period dealt with to such an extent as to permit of a formal foundation laying. There is much reason to suppose that this ceremony only took place in the second year of Darius (compare Hag. ii. 15, 18; Zech. iv. 9; viii. 9), and that the description in Ezra (iii. 8—13) really applies to this event.

In any case the position of things was profoundly dangerous and discreditable to the newly founded community at Jerusalem. The enthusiasm that had steeled the exiles to the sacrifices, and

stirred them to face the toils and hazards of the return, was the inspiring thought of rebuilding their holy and beautiful house on Mount Zion, and of once more finding in the restored Temple a centre of national life, and faith, and hope. The abandonment of the enterprise, under external opposition and personal disheartenment, meant practically the acknowledgment of political impotence and the renunciation of their patriotic and religious destiny. That the work was one of immense difficulty, that they were few in number and poor in resources, that discouraging and unforeseen obstacles supervened, these things were their misfortune, and not their fault. But that they supinely resigned themselves to defeat, that they too readily interpreted difficulties into insuperable barriers, or that, actually checkmated for the time, they too easily sat down under defeat, and turned to an exclusive and speedily all-engrossing concern for their own material prosperity, these symptoms of spiritual decline and demoralisation were at once their disgrace and their warning.

No doubt there was much to excuse and account for this sudden collapse of zeal and recoil from lofty aspiration to faithless self-seeking. Like other enthusiasts, they had taken up their high calling with genuine devotion, but with many a fond illusion. They had invested their eager hopes in a difficult enterprise, and had prematurely promised themselves the harvest of rich returns, discounting a future that was much farther off than they dreamt of. The glowing imagery and poetic imagination of an Isaiah, guaranteeing the levelling of mountains and the filling up of valleys; beholding God himself bearing them on eagle's wings over every obstacle; picturing Jerusalem restored and the Temple rebuilt for forgiven Israel by the labour and largess of heathen peoples and their monarchs—these and similar outbursts of prophetic faith they had taken literally, and reckoned on victory without conflict, achievement without weary waiting, and the immediate realisation of the prophet's gorgeous visions of Zion's Messianic glory and triumph.

Instead, they found themselves, a small and despised colony, confronted with the heart-breaking task and stupendous toil of rebuilding ruins, reclaiming a soil spoiled by neglect, hindered and thwarted by petty enmities on every side, deceived by large imperial promises that were forgotten, or delayed by official indolence, or intercepted by the intrigues of rivals, with no prospects before them but a slow, desperate, and unaided hand-to-hand combat with untoward circumstances, adverse surroundings, and the depression of a mean and sordid existence. Human nature is but human. Reaction was inevitable. No wonder that enthusiasm gave way to despondency in face of such ob-

stacles, while spiritual life became crushed under the burden of grinding material toil, and so, partly of necessity and partly of demoralisation, the people having ceased to build the house of God, drifted slowly away from higher purposes, and threatened to sink to the level of the people of the land, satisfied to secure a physical subsistence, and forgetful of their Divine vocation and providential career.

3. *The Prophet's Message*.—At this critical point in the history of the restored community the prophet Haggai appeared on the scene, and to him, in concert with Zechariah (Ezra v. 1—2; vi. 14), belongs the credit of having recalled Israel to the path of duty and the ministry of revelation. The message of Haggai is directed to one definite purpose from beginning to end: to rouse the people to resume the erection of the sanctuary, to keep them steadfast to the work against every possible discouragement, and to inspire them with an animating faith in the inner grandeur of the material undertaking on which they were engaged. Whether he chose his time and course quite independently, or in consultation with Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest, stimulated by the fact that under the new emperor circumstances favoured the attempt, are points that must stand on their own inherent probability.

The Book of Haggai consists of three prophetic appearances, falling respectively in the sixth, seventh, and ninth months of the second year of Darius. The prophet pillories the people's acquiescent procrastination of the duty of rearing and finishing the Temple, while they themselves (1 Chron. xvii. 1) dwell in well-panelled houses. He seizes on that very element in their condition which had been their chief excuse for delay, the poorness of the material progress already made, and turns it into a stimulus to energetic action. Boldly he declares that a blight and canker of dissatisfaction must rest on all they do, so long as the central element of moral and material prosperity is neglected, and with promises of happier days and more rewardful industry, he urges them to concentrate the whole energies and resources of the community on the restoration of the Temple (i. 1—11).

The appeal pierces the conscience and convinces the judgment of the little colony. The prophet assures them that in their new obedience to the Divine will they shall have the presence with them and the succour of Jehovah, and twenty-four days later operations are commenced on the Temple ruins (i. 12—15). Before a month had elapsed a moral danger menaced the undertaking. With natural retrospective partiality, with no ill intentions, but with the most disheartening effects on the workers, the old people, who remembered the splendour of the former

Temple (Ezra iii. 12—13), indulged in disparaging comparisons between its magnificence and the poverty of its successor, doubted whether the future could retrieve the vanished past, and questioned if Israel's forfeited birthright were not lost beyond recall. Energetically the prophet intervenes, protests against such faithlessness in the Divine presence and tenacity of purpose, declares that God's promises may linger on the way, but cannot lapse on account of man's unfaithfulness, and in view of Jehovah's power, the changes of providence, and the certainty of Heaven's resolves, predicts, with ringing certainty of assurance, that the future glory of the Temple shall outshine all the wonders of the past in the peace and perfect fruition of God's accomplished purposes (ii. 1—9).

Two months later a fresh intervention took place. Apparently doubts were expressed in some quarters, if the completion of the Temple would bring the desired and promised prosperity, which the erection of the altar and performance of religious rites had failed to secure. Haggai, by an illustration derived from the rules of ceremonial holiness and defilement, shows the people that all their previous endeavours were contaminated and robbed of blessing by the guilt of their neglect of their central and supreme obligation, and, assuring them that the impotence of partial surrender to God's will must not be made the measure of the possibilities of complete consecration, promises them the progress and well-being that had been hitherto lacking (ii. 10—19). Then, turning to the head and representative of the small and unassuming theocracy, which yet held within it the promise and potency of Heaven's best gift to men, the prophet foretells the downfall and overthrow of all worldly powers and authorities, and through the Divine favour, fidelity, and unchanging purpose of redemption, predicts the ultimate supremacy of God's chosen servant and minister on earth (ii. 20—23).

4. *Literary and Ethical Qualities.*—The language of Haggai is simple, sober, and pure. Two or three unwonted expressions belong rather to the writer's individuality than to his age. Compared with the picturesque imagery, glowing poetry, majestic conceptions, and impassioned oratory of an Isaiah, his style seems cold, threadbare, and poverty-stricken. But the comparison is hardly just, for the purposes and circumstances of the speakers are so diverse, and in all likelihood their personalities were equally contrasted. The aim of Haggai was immediate, matter-of-fact, and circumscribed. The circumstances of the people were reduced, their horizon narrowed, and the contents of their national existence simplified. But it would be a mistake to accuse our prophet of insignificance because of his composition,

or of superficiality because of the character of his mission. A prophet's historical magnitude is measured not by the literary splendour of his style, but by the importance of the work that he accomplishes.

It was an attenuated community and a contracted field on which Haggai had to operate; but none the less he saved his people from moral extinction and preserved in them the kingdom of God, just as much as any of his more heroic forerunners. His material goal was, indeed, the erection of a temple of stone and mortar; but who can read his words of ethical and spiritual anticipation (ii. 6—9, 20—23) without feeling that he valued the building only as the shrine of the knowledge, fellowship, and power of the living God of providence and history, and recognised in their neglect or performance of this external service Israel's abandonment of or allegiance to its high and holy vocation as the people of God upon earth?

He does, doubtless, exhibit marks of the limitations and tendencies of the new epoch of Israel's history with its more ecclesiastical development, its ceremonial and Levitical engrossment (ii. 11—14), its particularistic and not altogether lovely severance from the common sympathies and aspirations of humanity. While we have in the import attached to the Davidic personality of Zerubbabel a prolongation of the pre-Exilic hope, and in the vast pictures of the world's throes that usher in the Messianic times echoes of Isaiah's mighty dreams, we have, on the other hand, in the prominence of the Temple building the development of Ezekiel's priestly programme, and a preluding warning of the inevitable narrowing of Israel's national life in the future.

Yet it was precisely in this pathway that God's purpose was to work itself out, and His people achieve their redemptive mission to mankind. It was a mingled sowing of noble and of base, of good and of evil, and it had a mingled harvest. But, standing away back at the beginning of that strange process, beyond all question the aspirations that stirred the soul of Haggai, and the visions of glory and of peace that glow in his prophecies, were the seed, not of that sterile Judaism that rejected and refused their fulfilment, but the precursors and harbingers of the true glory of the second Temple—Jesus Christ and His kingdom of righteousness and peace.

ZECHARIAH.

1. *Account of the Prophet.*—The eleventh book of the minor prophets is assigned in the title (i. 1) to a prophet called “Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo,” who began his career in the “eighth month of the second year of Darius.” His early utterances deal with the rebuilding of the Temple, and we may therefore with absolute certainty identify him with the Zechariah mentioned in Ezra (v. 1; vi. 14), as the colleague of Haggai in spurring on the people to achieve this great and arduous enterprise. It is true that in Ezra Zechariah is called “the son of Iddo,” but it is probable that this curt designation, linking him immediately with his grandfather (cf. Gen. xxix. 5; 2 Kings ix. 20), is due to the fact that Berechiah died prematurely, and so Zechariah succeeded directly to the rights and dignities of his grandfather.

This presumption is confirmed by the fact, that in the table of priestly succession in Nehemiah xii. (cf. vv. 4, 16) an Iddo who returned with Joshua from Babylon is followed by a Zechariah, who can hardly be other than the author of these prophecies. That being so, we must refuse to find in our prophet the Zechariah, son of Jeberechiah, of Isaiah’s time (Isaiah viii. 2), or the martyr Zechariah, whom our Lord cites as slain between the temple and the altar (Mat. xxiii. 35). But we may reasonably infer that this prophet of the Restoration was of priestly birth, and comparatively a young man when he commenced his prophetic work. The name is one of the most common in Hebrew history, and has been explained to mean *memory of Jehovah*, or *who remembers Jehovah*, but the analogy of similarly constructed names rather points to the signification *whom Jehovah remembers*. Of our prophet tradition has much to relate that is curious, but presents nothing quite reliable. There is a certain likelihood in the statements that he lived to a great age, and was buried near to Haggai in the priests’ place of sepulture.

2. *Unity of the Book.*—The unity of the book, ascribed to Zechariah, has long been contested. More than two centuries ago the English scholar, Mede, raised the question in the interest

of reverence for Scripture. Remarking that in Matthew xxvii. 9, 10, a prediction is ascribed to Jeremiah that nowhere occurs in his writings, but is nearly akin to the purport of Zechariah xi. 12, 13, he argues that the inspired evangelist's citation outweighs in authority the mechanical arrangement of the Hebrew canon, which may well be, here as elsewhere, inexact in respect of authorship and chronology. He instances the loose order of the oracles contained in the Book of Jeremiah, the combination in other collections of utterances of various writers, the possibilities of mistake latent in the custom of engrossing on the same parchment roll diverse Scriptures according to considerations of space and convenience. Further, he urges the discord of character, contents, and aim between the earlier and undoubted utterances of the Zechariah of the Restoration, and the later chapters of our book.

While much importance cannot be attached to the motive of Mede's critical questionings, Christian scholarship has found in the grounds with which he confirmed them matter for serious consideration, and at the present moment one of the most perplexed and uncertain problems of Old Testament study is the connection and origin of the various parts of the Book of Zechariah. The first division (i.—viii.) is universally ascribed to Zechariah, the colleague of Haggai, and dated B.C. 520—518. The second division (ix.—xiv.) is usually separated into two distinct sections (ix.—xi. and xii.—xiv.), and is assigned to one or two prophets prior to the Exile, or to one or more writers of a much later date than the restoration. There are, however, not wanting scholars who maintain the single, undivided authorship of Zechariah.

3. *Summary of the First Division.*—The first eight chapters form a collection of utterances, complete and circumscribed, directed throughout to promote the erection of the Temple. The circumstances of the period have been fully described in the pages dealing with the Book of Haggai. The work had been paralysed by actual difficulties, but still more by supineness of spirit and despond. What the people needed was the inspiration of a soaring faith and the heartening of buoyant hope. This is precisely the spirit that animates the addresses of Zechariah—a spirit, we may be sure, attained by himself not without struggle, if we have regard to the mingled elements of doubt and reassurance, of questioning and enlightenment, that made his messages so helpful to his hearers, and render them still so biographically interesting to us.

The oracles consist of three groups all minutely dated: (1) chap. i. 1—6, in the eighth month of the second year of Darius,

consisting of an admonitory prelude ; (2) chaps. i. 7 ; vi. 15, in the four-and-twentieth day of the eleventh month of the same year, consisting of a seven-fold vision, with its termination (vi. 1—8), and an appendix (vi. 9—15); (3) chaps. vii. 1—viii. 23, in the fourth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius, consisting of a judgment concerning fast days and feasts. Zechariah's prophetic action is a warning appeal to the people's melancholy past. Bygone calamity should not create despond but inspire wisdom. The prophets of old and their admonitions were unheeded. Preachers and hearers are dead and gone, but the Divine judgments foretold have come terribly true. All that is human passes away, but the will of God prevails and abides. That alone must be done (i. 1—6). But where is the promise of a glorious restoration of God's kingdom in Judea ? The land lies desolate, and the great world to all appearance is inert.

In a vision the prophet sees the heavenly couriers, that ride through the world, and realises the watchful interest in men's affairs of Divine providence. Beneath the seeming neglect and inactivity there are present and working an impassioned zeal of God for His People, slow but sure resentment of the heathen's excesses, and Israel's imminent restitution to power and prosperity in the exercise of His Divine vocation (i. 7—17). Is this possible in a world where Israel's foes are so formidable, and God's people so ruined and reduced ? The horns that scattered Israel may tower aloft stupendous enough and menacing, but the secret resistless forces of Jehovah's righteous rule of the world are filing their roots through, and they must suddenly topple down in impotence (i. 18—21). The Jerusalem of to-day, slowly and insignificantly emerging from its ruins, may seem small and stripped of great possibilities in the future. Nevertheless God's city shall so expand that no walls can contain it, nor for its defence shall it require earthly ramparts, secure in God's keeping as within a wall of fire. Therefore let God's people quit their homes of exile amid the doomed heathen, and hasten to Zion, sacred as the chosen dwelling-place of God, and the cradle of the world's destiny (ii. 1—13).

But can a lost vocation be resumed, and bygone guilt atoned ? Does not the sordid present prove that the past is irretrievable, and Israel's election gone beyond recall ? The high priest, clad in stained garments, stands before Heaven's judgment throne, accused by Satan, but the Divine judge himself rebukes the adversary, vindicates his claim of access to God, invests him anew in priestly robes of acceptance, pronounces the saved remnant of Israel the object of God's love and high election, and

declares that the unseeming present already holds within it the germ and promise of the Messianic kingdom (iii. 1—10). To sight it is not easy to discern in the feeble instruments of the present the implements capable of such achievement. It needs faith to recognise their potency in the inspiration of them by God with His might and spirit. The golden candlestick, emblem of Israel's hope and life, might well burn out impoverished, but not if in deed and truth its flame be fed by ever-renewed oil of two living olive-trees, emblem of Israel's civil and religious heads rooted in the infinite and perennial resources of Divine omnipotence. With such supernatural succour human frailty may accomplish the building of the Temple, and all things besides (iv. 1—14). Divine support demands on man's side moral co-operation. To be Jehovah's instrument in realising His kingdom Israel must be purged clean from the evils that canker and corrode, paralyse and destroy a people's material and spiritual potency.

This national purification is imaged in a flying roll, charged with destructive retribution upon all dishonesty and untruth (v. 1—4). With this outward cleansing, the evil spirit, that was old Israel's ruin, shall depart clean away, and be replaced by God's own spirit of righteousness and truth. This transformation is pictured in the vision of the woman, borne away to the land of uncleanness in a leaden-lidded ephah, carried by two women with the wind in their wings (v. 5—11). All enigmas are now solved, all questions answered, the future and its process stand forth clear and certain. The vision has reached its end. The Divine emissaries ride forth to the four quarters of the earth, charged to execute everywhere the good and holy will of God, who quietly awaits the result (vi. 1—8). To this sevenfold vision of hope the prophet attached an action of bold encouragement. From some gold, contributed by exiles in Babylon, he had a crown or crowns made, and crowning the high priest (or the prince, or both—there is uncertainty about the narrative), promised the speedy completion of the Temple, and the advent of the expected Messianic reign of peace and glory (vi. 9—15).

The third section of these opening chapters presents an animated discourse of encouragement, springing from a question whether the fasts of the Exile should not at once be changed into feasts. Fasting and feasting, says the prophet, are nothing in themselves. They did not cause nor avert your fathers' fall. What God asked was the doing of justice and mercy. They disobeyed and perished. Your duty now is not to indulge in sadness or despair, but to cherish bright confidence in God's zeal and power; to put forth your best energies in your work, relying on

the promised prosperity ; and above all to practise truth and righteousness. So shall God give you a future of unapproachable splendour, in which Israel shall be the centre of the world's aspiration and faith, because in Israel God lives and moves and rules (vii. 1—viii. 23).

4. *Style.*—The language of these prophecies is remarkably pure Hebrew, containing few, if any, traces of Aramaic influences. The style is mostly plain and prosaic, as befits description ; but there are impassioned passages, where the speaker is moved in ethical appeals or in the delineation of Messianic glories. The form of his utterances, in respect of vision, interpretation, &c., is allied to the methods of Ezekiel and Daniel, though similar phenomena are present in earlier prophets, *viz.*, in Amos, &c. Some of the features, such as the Divine couriers, angels, the female personification of Wickedness, the accusing Satan, &c., remind us of characteristic ideas of the Books of Job and Proverbs.

On the surface the prophet's conceptions and personal feelings might be accused of Jewish particularism and Levitical contrastedness of interest. When we allow for circumstances, the necessity of telling on immediate hearers, and when we search the seer's hopes and aspirations to their depths, we shall not refuse to see in his mood and theology the elements of limitation, that lent themselves to later Judaism ; but we shall much more wonder at Zechariah's miracle of faith and invincible loyalty to the promise, and recognise in him a strong and indispensable combatant for the triumph of righteousness and of God upon earth.

5. *Summary of the Second Division.*—The second portion of the Book of Zechariah is clearly divided into two main sections, each introduced by the phrase, *The burden of the Word of the Lord*, which also stands at the head of the following prophecy of Malachi. The first section consists of three pieces, which may roughly be divided as in the chapters of our Authorised Version.

Divine retribution is approaching from the north. The Syrian peoples are overthrown ; the Phœnician cities subdued ; the Philistine states depopulated, repeopled by a mixed race, and made vassals to Judah ; while God's people shall remain unharmed, encompassed by God's care. Zion's long looked for king comes, powerful to save, lowly of heart, resistlessly imposing peace on the peoples. Israel's bondage is over : his prisoners shall return ; his warriors—Judah and Ephraim combined—vanquish the sons of Greece, irresistible in might Divine ; and the land is crowned with prosperity and joy (ix. 1—17).

From God alone must Israel's well-being be sought, and not

from false guides and hurtful leaders, against whom God's anger burns. Jehovah Himself will fight for Israel, restore the houses of Judah and Joseph, overthrow the power of Assyria and Egypt, recall the exiles and re-erect the theocratic kingdom (x. 1—12). Invasion from the north is rolling onward, and falls with destruction on the chosen land. For God's people have been wayward and rebellious. He would have delivered them from heartless shepherds and tended them Himself, securing for them favour with the nations and unity among themselves (*i.e.* between Ephraim and Judah). These shepherds were cut off in one month ; but they wearied Jehovah, and He broke the rod of *favour* that shielded them from external hostility. Finally rejected as their shepherd, He next broke the brotherhood between Ephraim and Judah, and delivered them over to the cruelty of a worthless shepherd, to their undoing and that ultimately of the shepherd (xi. 1—17).

The connection of this piece with the two foregoing discourses is hard to make out, if we are to take it as the sequel. One can hardly help asking, if it is not rather a mournful retrospect of Israel's history up to the Exile, showing the people's wilful guilt and Jehovah's unwilling but necessary rejection of them. It is also a question whether originally the passage (xiii. 7—9) did not conclude this delineation, though where it now stands its presence is justified and, indeed, essential.

The second section falls into two discourses, and differs from the previous passages in taking no more note of Ephraim, which is perhaps predominant over Judah in the former. God, who is Lord of human destiny, has set Jerusalem to be the world's centre, and the test of the fortunes of all other peoples. All nations, combined in attack upon it, are smitten by God with blindness, and the city is delivered. The deliverance commences in the country districts of Judæa, and the whole people are inspired with preternatural prowess (xii. 1—8). A spirit of contrition seizes on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and they bewail *him whom they pierced* with a universal grief like the national mourning for Josiah slain in the battle of Megiddo (xii. 9—14). A fountain of cleansing shall be opened in the land, and the people shall purge themselves of all sins, especially of idolatry and false prophecy (xiii. 1—6).

Again disaster looms out in the opening of a last great oracle. By God's ordering Israel's shepherd is slain and the flock are scattered, one-third only surviving, but refined and purified they are restored to Divine favour and their high vocation (xiii. 7—9). Jerusalem, assailed by all nations, is already taken, pillaged, and half the people led away captive. Suddenly Jehovah inter-

venes, cleaves Mount Olivet in two, and saves His people in the cleft, and so "at evening time there shall be light" (xiv. 1—8). From Jerusalem living waters flow out to the world; God reigns there, the land is transfigured, and densely and happily re-peopled (xiv. 9—11). The heathen foes of Jerusalem are destroyed by plagues, disunion, and internecine war, and their wealth transferred to God's people (xiv. 12—15). The surviving heathen go up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of tabernacles and worship Jehovah, recalcitrants being destroyed by plague and drought, while in Jerusalem holiness pervades even the most common things of daily life, and henceforth nothing intrudes alien, unclean, or hurtful (xiv. 16—21).

6. *Theories of Commentators.*—A perusal of this analysis, much more a careful study of the book, will suffice to show how remarkable a contrast there is between the first eight chapters and the concluding six. In the former we are surrounded by the sights and sounds of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and at every step we know where we are; but as soon as we leave them, where are we? We seem to pass at one step from solid earth and transparent sunlight into an obscure labyrinth or a country in the clouds, where all things are shadowy, confused, and intermingled. So vague and perplexed is the interpretation of these oracles, that the best commentators are hopelessly divided in their allocation, distributing them respectively over a period of five or six hundred years.

The most probable theories may be reduced to three. First, it is maintained that the second half of the book contains prophecies penned by the Zechariah of the first half, but after a very long interval, in old age, and altered circumstances. Secondly, the latter half of the book is broken into two portions, of which chaps. ix.—xi. (usually with xiii. 7—9 added) are the work of a pre-Exilic prophet about the time of King Ahaz (B.C. 735), possibly the Zechariah Ben Jeberechiah mentioned in Isaiah viii. 2, while chaps. xii.—xiv. (*minus* xiii. 7—9) are the production of a prophet in the time of Jeremiah (B.C. 606), possibly the Urijah referred to in Jeremiah xxvi. 20. Thirdly, the six chapters, as a whole or possibly in separate sections, are assigned to a much later period than the age of Zechariah, varying from the beginning of the third to the middle of the second century before Christ.

An immense range of considerations is involved in the discussion of the problem, and some of the most valuable evidence is of a very subtle literary description. It is impossible here to do more than indicate some of the palpable and most solid arguments that go to determine the issue. We shall refer to the

three divisions, *i.e.* chaps i.—viii., ix.—xi., xii.—xiv. as Parts I., II., and III. for the sake of brevity and convenience.

7. *Literary and Historical Evidence.*—The language of the several sections of the Book of Zechariah has been subjected to careful scrutiny and minute analysis with very conflicting results. Evidence of divergent vocabulary has been neutralised by alleging the reasonableness of diversity in view of the changes of theme, and is confronted by proof of community in the use of certain characteristic expressions and idioms, but nothing significant has been by either side established. The difference of style between the prosaic periods of Part I., and the oratorical and imaginative flights of Parts II. and III.; the absence in these of the visions, interpreting angel and allied imagery of the early chapters; the lack of definite and dated headings in the later portion, and the failure to ascribe the utterances to Zechariah or any other; the striking change of scene and theme; the vast and dim and distant vistas that replace the earlier near view and circumscribed horizon; these and a host of other contrasts are real and significant, but do not in themselves establish separate authorship, though they go to prove lapse of time in production, and a decisive transformation of situation, mood and aim.

When we proceed to search for definite historical allusions, or disclosures of actual background, that might positively fix the origin of these six chapters, we encounter a remarkable conflict of probabilities. In chap. ix. disaster descends on Syria, Hamath, and the cities of Phoenicia and Philistia, while Israel is preserved; and in chaps. x. Assyria and Egypt are presented as the powers that on either side have injured and still threaten Ephraim and Judah. Moreover, these two exist as co-ordinate and warlike states, while apparently in chap. x. there is reference made to the anarchy of the last years of Ephraim. All this, it is urged, points conclusively to the period of Hosea and the early years of Isaiah. But against this construction there is much to be said. Apparently from ix. 13, at the time of this prophecy, Israel's worst enemies and oppressors are the Greeks, which could hardly be put forward prior to the Exile.

It may be said, that what is meant here, as in Joel iii., is simply that at an early period Hebrew slaves had been sold to the Ionians; but surely the manner of the reference implies that Greece was then Israel's worst enemy, which points to the opening of the fifth or the end of the fourth century. If the discourse is purely a general forecast, the former might well be the period, and into that age Zechariah may easily have survived and prophesied. If on the contrary a particular occurrence shapes this ninth chapter, unquestionably what fits it best is Alexander's

victorious march, when after the battle of Issus (B.C. 333) he swooped down on Syria, captured Tyre after a short siege, received the submission of the Palestinian towns, and put the inhabitants of Gaza to the edge of the sword.

In post-Exilic times the Jews had much to endure from the inhabitants of the countries and cities named in ix. 1—8 (cf. 1 Mac. v. ; Sir. i. 26, &c.), and the statement of ix. 6 reminds us irresistibly of the unintelligibility of the language of Ashdod in Nehemiah's time (Neh. xiii. 24), due probably to intermixture of the old race with Arab immigrants (Neh. iv. 7). During this period, if we understand by Assyria, either Persia (cf. Ezra vi. 22) or the Seleucid Kingdom in its rivalry of the Ptolemies, Judæa had constant cause for uneasiness, and was involved in actual suffering through the restless relations of Egypt to the opposing power on the other side of Palestine. Again, it seems more in conformity with the language both of chaps. ix. and xi. to consider Ephraim and Judah not as co-ordinate states, but as actually united, and as the period prior to the original schism is impossible, we should have recourse to the post-Exilic period, when the restored community was held to be the representative in idea and in fact of all Israel, or to a still later time, when the Hebrew community in Galilee or the Diaspora was described under the old name of Ephraim.

During this era there was also plenty of occasion to picture Israel as the prey of rapacious and worthless shepherds (xi.), while the degree of the dispersion suggested by such passages as ix. 11—13, x. 6, 11, can hardly be referred to the Assyrian devastation of Gilead and Lebanon, but drives us powerfully to think of times subsequent to the Exile (compare ix. 12, with Isaiah xl. 2, xlii. 7).

Coming now to Part III., we are struck by the absence of any further reference to Ephraim, the exclusive interest of the writer in Jerusalem, and the remarkable alteration of atmosphere and prospect. This diversity is enough to suggest difference in the time of composition, but hardly distinction of authorship and epoch, at least unless both parts are pre-Exilic. In chap. xii. the presentment of Jerusalem's danger has a decidedly post-Exilic character, while if the allusion to deliverance originating in the country be occasioned by any definite event, we should find the motive in the story of the Maccabees. If it be urged that the event contemplated is the Chaldean disaster, then it is difficult to combine the tenor of the prophecy with the teaching of Jeremiah, or its details with the actual circumstances and facts. It is vain to urge that Josiah's death is still recent, on account of the reference in xii. 11, in face of the parallel allusion to the

earthquake of King Uzziah in xiv. 5. The manner in which the house of David is introduced (xii. 12) and the absence of any mention of a king favour the post-Exilic theory, while the citation of idolatrous practices and false prophecy as prevalent sins does not exclude the later dates, when we consider the reason of Nehemiah's stern resistance of mixed marriages, and the statements of post-Exilic literature, both sacred and secular (Neh. xiii. 26; Mal. iii. 5; Joseph. Antiq. viii. 2—5, &c.). The special reference to Egypt of xiv. 18, 19, while it peculiarly suits the period of Josiah and Jehoiakim, is too undefined and too natural at any time to serve in fixing the date, and the same may be said of the suggested allusion to Manasseh's persecutions (xii. 10), and other proposed combinations.

A very valuable line of investigation has been led, but awaits further and more exact prosecution, in the shape of determining relationship between the language and ideas of these chapters and the various books of the Old Testament prophetic literature. It is impossible to enter into the details of the process, but, while much may still be doubtful, it seems fair to say that a number of points of contact exist between these six chapters and the prophets of the Exile, and that it is hardly possible to believe that these have borrowed from Zechariah ix.—xiv. Moreover, while much of the wording of the prophecies in question recalls earlier times, it can hardly be denied that the general atmosphere is priestly, apocalyptic, post-Exilic. Much of the imagery leads to the same conclusion, and the Messianic conceptions and expectations belong to the later prophetic developments.

If these impressions be well-founded—and the flow of critical opinion is setting in the direction of the theory of post-Exilic origin—then we must account for those features of language and allusion, which suggest an early date, in one or other of two ways. Either the author, as has been suggested of Obadiah, took up ancient oracles, that lent themselves to his purpose, and especially in chaps. ix.—xi. adapted them to express the fears and hopes and faults of his own day. Or else, in conformity with a literary affectation or custom of his age, or from personal reverence for what was old and venerable, he deliberately clothed his messages to his own age in an archaic dress, and framed them in a more or less allegorical form.

Both suppositions are easily possible, and might be supported by many similar phenomena. But it is probable that it will for many a day remain an open question, whether Zechariah wrote the entire book, the first part in youth, the second in old age; or whether the oracles of two earlier seers, existing in manuscript without note of authorship, came in later times to be appended

to the genuine work of Zechariah; or whether the production of a prophet in the time of the Ptolemies was first combined with the work of Malachi, receiving similar headings, the whole subsequently placed in the canon after the original Zechariah, till in course of time these chapters came to be taken as part of Zechariah's own prophecies. Between these last suppositions there is little to choose, for in the one case how came a work of the eighth century to be tagged on to Zechariah, and in the other how came a second or third century piece to find its way in among the prophets instead of going to the Hagiographa?

Whatever the origin of these prophecies, all will unite in admiration of their majestic, if sometimes weird and sombre grandeur. They are couched in a style of much power and imaginative beauty. The religious conceptions, marked as they are by inevitable imperfections, are in their essential contents profound and creative. How great has been their influence can only be measured by those who are acquainted with Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings. The part they play in the Messianic delineations of the New Testament needs not to be recounted. In each and all of its elements and influence the Book of Zechariah has amply vindicated its right to a place in the history of the Old Dispensation, and beyond the measure of many other prophecies has prepared and heralded the advent of Christ and the establishment of His Kingdom.

MALACHI.

1. *Authorship*.—The canon of the minor prophets is closed by the Book of Malachi, who has therefore been called by the Jews “the seal of the prophets.” Of the author we know absolutely nothing. It is even doubtful if we are in possession of his real name. The word Malachi, if it is not an abbreviation, means either *angelic*, or *my angel*, or *messenger*. More probably it is a contraction for Malachijah, as Abi (2 Kings xviii. 2) is for Abijah (2 Chron. xxix. 1), and signifies *messenger* or *angel of Jehovah*. In any case the meaning of the name is remarkable. The name itself is not borne by any other person in the Old Testament, nor is our prophet mentioned in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, though they contain such elaborate lists of the families and personages of the period. The word (*Malachi = my messenger*) occurs in a characteristic passage of the book (iii. 1).

The title (i. 1), which gives no patronymic, or birthplace, or detail of any description, is curiously similar to the headings of the closing sections of Zechariah (ix. 1; xii. 1). Consequently the idea early arose that the word is not the writer’s proper name, but either a *nom de guerre* employed by himself, or a convenient title of reference attached to the book by some scribe or editor, suggested by the most picturesque and outstanding phrase of the prophecy. The Septuagint prefixes to the prophecy the heading *Malachias*, but translates the title, *The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by the hand of His messenger or angel*. The Targum inserts the note, *Malachi, whose name is Ezra the scribe*.

The idea of a *nom de guerre*, though rejected by a majority of writers, found favour with not a few Jewish Rabbis and early Christian authors, while some eminent modern scholars argue strongly for the ascription of the book to Ezra. Unquestionably the facts already cited create a considerable degree of uncertainty about the name. But that Ezra should have been the author, in face of the absence of his name and differences of style, is hard

to believe, while the notion of anonymity has against it the general custom and essential character of the prophetic function, and in addition the peculiar difficulty, not to say impossibility, of concealment in the circumstances of the restored Jewish community.

2. *Date.*—The period of Malachi's activity may be determined with approximate exactness. As in the case of Haggai and Zechariah, we find ourselves among the Jews of the Restoration, but at a much later point in their history. The question of the prophetic urgency is no more the rebuilding of the sanctuary. The Temple exists, and the routine of sacrifice has been long in operation. Unlike the desolations of Edom, the ruins of Jerusalem have been repaired. The Jewish colony is established on a firm footing, but the enthusiasm of a restoration, that has proved only partial, has given way to disappointment and doubt. In the depression of weary delay, faith has sunk into scepticism, and religious indifference has engendered various disorders; in particular, a scandalous degradation of divine worship, grave irregularities in the priesthood and perversions of their office, widespread social oppression and injustice, and especially a dangerous readiness to intermarry with heathen neighbours.

The picture corresponds minutely with the delineations in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and therefore points unmistakably to a period commencing about half a century after the Restoration, and terminating with the second administration of Nehemiah (say B.C. 475—425). The book has been dated earlier and also later, but practically the question narrows itself to a choice between the time of Ezra's first reforming activity (B.C. 458) and the final intervention of his successor and coadjutor, Nehemiah (B.C. 425). So far as the abuses dealt with by the prophet are concerned, they were probably as prevalent on Ezra's arrival as on the occasion of Nehemiah's second visit. We know that it was so with regard to the laxity of marriage (Ezra ix., x.), and who can doubt that the kindred corruptions existed likewise? Still there is not that minute detail of correspondence which we find between the prophecy and the narrative of Nehemiah's reformation (Neh. xiii.).

Moreover, had Malachi worked so early, the fact could hardly but have been chronicled in the history, while if he laboured at the later date, the failure to mention him is not inexplicable in a record of such brevity. If the reference to the ruins unrepaired of Edom (i. 3) implies the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls, that would fix us to a point subsequent to Nehemiah's first governorship (B.C. 433). If it be the case that prior to this time the

material for the Temple service was a charge on the imperial purse (Ezra vi. 9 ; vii. 20—23), a similar inference would follow since Malachi holds the people responsible, and we know that Nehemiah publicly pledged them to provide what was necessary for the maintenance of religion (Neh. x. 32—39).

The prominence given to the law of Moses, and particularly to questions of worship, suggests a time subsequent to the promulgation of the Mosaic code by Ezra (Neh. viii.) and the solemn covenant imposed upon the nation, which especially emphasised observance of the law, purity of marriage, sanctity of the Sabbath, prescribed release of debtors, and the endowment of the Temple. It may, however, be urged that, with the doubtful exception of the allusion to the tithes (iii. 10), the chief references to the law (*e.g.* Horeb (iv. 4), statutes and judgments (iv. 4), covenant with Levi (ii. 4), &c., are distinctly Deuteronomic, and surely, had Malachi shortly followed the enactment of the great national covenant, he would have expressly appealed to it as an aggravation of the people's guilt, and used it as a goad to their consciences. A positive decision may be impossible, but the balance of opinion inclines decisively to the later date.

In that case we may think of Malachi as either the precursor of Nehemiah's reform, conducting an agitation prior to his return, or as his adjutant in actually effecting the reform. The allusion to the custom of going with presents to the governor has been held to exclude Nehemiah's actual administration, because he did not exact his official dues (Neh. v. 14). But a gift to ingratiate the giver is quite another thing, and, moreover, the reference is not personal or local, but general and purely illustrative. Apart, however, from this irrelevant point, every consideration combines to recommend as the period of Malachi's prophetic activity the years of religious relapse, of restiveness under burdens warmly taken up, of weariness of vows enthusiastically made and now meanly shirked, which followed the departure of Nehemiah and preceded his return.

If this be so, then the advent of the stern reformer in the unforeseen suddenness of his appearance, in his fiery zeal for God's house and service, in his merciless severity of reformation, in his embodiment of the spirit of an Elijah, and in his inexorable enforcement of the law of Moses, must have appeared an immediate, if only a partial, fulfilment of the threatenings and promises of Malachi.

3 *Character and Purpose.*—The book is not a collection of speeches uttered on different occasions. It forms one continuous composition, prepared for publication perhaps, rather than for

oral delivery. It is addressed to an age of overt, though unavowed, national discontent and disaffection. Theocratic scepticism, born of moral obtuseness, is the evil which Malachi confronts. The people look at their slow and humbling recovery, in place of the rapid and glorious progress prophecy had led them to anticipate, and they ask bitterly, "Is this God's peculiar love of His people?" The prophet's reply points them to the significant fact of Jehovah's persistent restoration of Israel to national existence, in contrast with the irretrievable downfall of their kinsmen the Edomites. That the reverses of fortune should be Edom's destruction, but Israel's discipline, is proof that Israel possesses a unique place and destiny in the Divine purposes (i. 1—5).

The answer is adequate, but requires to be supplemented by an explanation of what is painful and perplexing in the present situation of tardy recovery. This is done by pointing out that the delay in fulfilling Israel's destiny is due not to Divine slackness, but to Israel's unworthiness and disloyalty to the covenant. The indictment consists of two parts, of which the first seizes and scathes with burning scorn the degradation of Divine worship, the corruptions of the priesthood, and the social wrongs among the people (i. 6 ; ii. 16), while the second lays bare their roots in religious doubt of God's moral earnestness, the profitability of His service, and His fidelity to fulfil the promises of the covenant (ii. 17 ; iv. 6).

The people are unwilling to admit their culpability, and it is necessary for the prophet to drive his charges home. Sons honour their fathers, servants their masters, but Israel has no reverence, not even bare respect for God. For His worship they select the sorriest beasts of their flocks and the shabbiest remnants of their possessions, such as they would never think of presenting to the civil ruler, and in this loveless insult priests and people are unblushingly combined. Better far to shut the Temple and to quench the altar's fire, for already in every land a worship ascends to Jehovah pure and warm and acceptable in His sight (i. 6—14).

The priests, chosen by God to be the fountain of law and justice and religion, promised therefore the Divine favour and the people's honour and support, have perverted their office, corrupted justice, alienated the laity from religion and morality, and have, therefore, in just recompence forfeited their power to bless, destroyed the dignity of their high vocation, and incurred universal obloquy and contempt (ii. 1—9).

The people, forgetful of the obligations of theocratic brotherhood, reckless of the risk to religion and the continuity of a holy

seed, have intermarried for sordid advantages with heathen neighbours, and aggravated their guilt by heartlessly putting away their Jewish wives, whose tears and plaints ascending to heaven in the Temple court hide from God's eyes the sacrifice offered on the altar, and call down on the transgressors His righteous vengeance to root them and their houses out of His land and people (ii. 10—16).

This moral degeneracy has its root in a deep-seated religious scepticism. The delay in the accomplishment of the covenant promises, conceived selfishly and superficially as Israel's material aggrandisement, has begotten doubt of God's moral earnestness. Does God judge on earth? Is He on the side of the good and against the wicked (Ps. lxxiii.)? The prophet meets the sneering misgiving with a stern declaration of the certainty of the judgment, an explanation of its delay because of Israel's unreadiness for it, and a description of God's speedy advent, in order that He may, first of all, purge unsparingly people and priesthood, and, secondly, execute relentless judgment on all persistent wickedness (ii. 17—iii. 6). Further, the depression in the material affairs of the nation has produced scepticism as to God's care for human homage, that is, in its material form, doubt of the profitableness of God's service. The prophet protests that it is precisely this half-heartedness of worship and dishonesty in giving God His dues, that is the cause of their continued misfortunes. He challenges the people to make experiment of a contrasted course of conduct, and see what a wealth of blessing it will bring (iii. 7—12).

Finally, the divine delay to right Israel among the comity of the nations has, on the one hand, set the ungodly sneering in unbelief, and on the other moved the devout to mutual conference and sad but trustful prayer and waiting. God is not blind as His silence might seem to suggest. He marks the loyalty of these, the defiance of those. Speedily He will speak out, and in the triumph of the just and the destruction of the unjust He will make for ever unmistakable the eternal distinction of goodness and of evil. In a final manifestation of Divine grace and judgment God will avenge all wrong and establish all righteousness. He will make an end of sin, and gloriously reward His own, and so completely fulfil His covenant promises. In anticipation of that day Israel's duty is a loyal return to the spirit of the ancient law and prophecy. For that end Elijah, the great prophet of fidelity and national decision, shall return. Thus prepared, Israel can face the coming judgment without fear, and welcome the consummation of the Divine covenant (iii. 13; iv. 6).

4. *Method and Structure.*—The method and style of Malachi are exceedingly characteristic. How far they are the product of his own individuality and how far the creation of his age, it is not easy to determine. Critics probably make too much of the latter influence, and too little of the former. The language is good, pure Hebrew, and, with the exception of one or two passages, easy to read and understand. The integrity of the entire book is admitted, though quite recently the genuineness of the last verse has been questioned. The prophet's style has power, fulness, fire, with a certain logical restraint and mechanical uniformity that disguise its intrinsic energy. Though some passages remind us of the dramatic oratory of the great prophets, the greater part is couched rather in the style of the legal pleader or moral reasoner. The structure has more of plan and detailed arrangement, more of argument and appeal to first principles, more, in short, of the scribe and the school. But it is possible that Malachi's sententious maxims, and citations of objections and captious questions, may represent the clash of actual public exhortation and discussion, and, in any case, in their warmth and point they are far removed from the cold dialectic and logical chopping of a closet moralist.

If the manner of Malachi bears traces of the approaching reign of the scribes, there is also a very perceptible breath of the coming winter of prophecy in his striking reversion to the thought of Moses and Elijah, in connection with the conception of a new spring-tide, that should be at the same time the fulfilment of the old. The presentiment found its verification in the silence of the voice of prophecy till the advent of Christ's forerunner, John the Baptist, and the prophetic intuition, its New Testament confirmation, in the spiritual significance of the story of the Transfiguration.

For the rest, it is false to accuse Malachi of harsh particularism and ceremonial shallowness. In the reference to Esau there is an appearance of harshness in the phraseology, but not in the prophet's positive conception, while there is a fine width and humaneness in his ideas of a world-wide service of Jehovah (i. 11), God's preference of mercy and justice over sacrifice and ceremony (ii. 13), and the ethical obligations of brotherhood created by the faith in a Divine Fatherhood (ii. 10).

If his thoughts and ideas move largely in the realm of Old Testament worship and material things, that is the penalty of his fidelity to his duty as a man of his own time and his own people. But if, as was right, his thoughts of God and his hopes for men begin on earth and are rooted in his own age, they

prove their heaven-born origin in this, that they do not end on earth or terminate in time, but grow on through the ages, and travel down through the generations, with a wealth of meaning that is inexhaustible, and a vitality that is eternal. The last word of the Old Testament has become the first of the New, and the faith of the prophet is finding its fulfilment in the fulness of Christ and of His kingdom.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS.*

The Problem of the Synoptic Gospels.—The first three Gospels present a problem which is believed to be unique in the history of literature. They are three biographies, which bear the names of different authors, which have each, so far as it can be traced, a separate and independent history, and which also in detail are marked by a number of substantial differences, and yet which at the same time agree together in a way that is so remarkable as evidently to need some special explanation. It is not only that the same incidents are chosen for narration, not only that they are narrated in what is frequently the same order—that order not being chronological—but also that the very words in which they are narrated are to a large extent identical. It is this extraordinary degree of resemblance which has given to the first three Gospels a name by which they are very commonly known—the Synoptic Gospels.

It has often been observed that, while the first three Gospels present all these numerous points of contact and coincidence, the fourth Gospel—though again not without such points of intimate relation—yet stands comparatively alone. And to distinguish

* Since this and the three following chapters were written, the criticism of the Synoptic Gospels appears to be entering upon a new phase. In several quarters at once there is a marked tendency, while accepting the main lines of an analysis similar to that which has been here given, to throw back the composition of the oldest form of Gospel (by some identified with the original "Oracles" of St. Matthew) to a date earlier than had hitherto been thought possible for it. The chief advocate of this view, Dr. Resch, in a work entitled "Agrapha," goes so far as to say that it is older than any of the extant books of the New Testament, and he contends that quotations were made from it not only in the earliest ecclesiastical literature, but throughout the New Testament itself, beginning with the First Epistle to Thessalonians, written about 52 A.D. It is probable that the arguments by which it is sought to prove this will be subject to considerable deductions, but they represent the fruit of twenty-five years' study, and cannot lightly be put aside.

them from it and bring out into clear relief this leading characteristic, a name has been coined from the Greek which means "capable of being seen in one view," or, as we might express it, "capable of arrangement in parallel columns."

It is well known that harmonies have frequently been attempted, both in English and in Greek, drawn up in this manner; among the best of which may be mentioned Robinson's "Harmony of the Four Gospels in Greek" (New York, 1845), with an English edition adapted from the work of the eminent American traveller and scholar; Fuller's "Harmony of the Gospels" (London, 1875), and Dr. E. A. Abbott's "Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels" (London, 1884). Literature does not contain another group of biographies which lends itself to such treatment in anything like the same degree.

The problem, however, consists not merely in the one relation of resemblance—which, if it stood alone, would not be so difficult to account for—but in the combined relation of resemblance and difference. The question is, what hypothesis will satisfactorily explain the phenomena, and explain them not only in general terms but when it comes to be applied in close detail?

It is practically agreed at the present time that the problem is a purely scientific one, and that it is not foreclosed by any theory of inspiration. Inspiration, as Christians are coming to see, is concerned with the substance of revelation rather than with its outward form. The very same inquiries which bring out the natural human element in Scripture, also show where that element ends. They point to causes at work which are rightly called not human, but in a special and peculiar sense Divine; and over and above this, the Christian will also believe in a Providence which shapes the ends and determines the course of all causes and operations, however indirectly associated with revelation; but this does not absolve him from the duty of seeking to trace the action of those causes by such methods as are alone open to him. He will write *σὺν Θεῷ*, "under God," over every theory that he may be led to form; but subject to that reservation, the fact that a theory accounts (humanly speaking) for the facts, is enough to give it a legitimate place in the growing body of organised knowledge.

We ask, then, what account is to be given of the very remarkable phenomena at once of agreement and of difference which characterize the first three, or Synoptic Gospels? The really scientific discussion of the question may be said to be little more than a century old. In earlier ages (if we except some isolated expressions in the writings of the Fathers) a natural and laudable

but, as we have seen, mistaken instinct of reverence put a veto upon the inquiry before it was well begun. But within the last hundred years a very great amount of acumen and industry has been brought to bear upon it. Almost every conceivable hypothesis has been started, applied, and criticised; and though a general agreement has not yet been reached, and the difficulties are yet some way from being all removed, real progress has nevertheless been made, and glimpses at least may be obtained of what promises to be a final solution.

To attempt to record all, or even any considerable part, of the hypotheses that have been raised, would only leave upon the reader's mind an impression of infinite confusion. It will therefore be best to select just a few salient or representative theories, which either have in the past attracted, or at present attract, the greatest amount of attention. These may be said to be: (1) The theory that after the writing of Gospels had once begun, the succeeding evangelists each made use of the work of his predecessor or predecessors. This we will call the theory of *successive dependence*. (2) The theory that all three Gospels alike are based upon a common foundation of tradition, more or less fixed in its form, though committed to writing for the first time in our present Gospels. This we will call the theory of *oral tradition*. (3) The theory that the Gospels derive their common element not merely from their dependence upon a common tradition, but from the common use of certain written documents. This we will call the theory of *documentary sources*.

In attempting to understand and to estimate each of these three hypotheses, it will be well to bear constantly in mind the conditions of the problem which we have to solve: viz., the combined presence of resemblance and of difference, and that no solution can be successful which does not account for both at once, and which does not show itself capable of being carried into detail.

1. *The Theory of Successive Dependence*.—This is the oldest theory. It goes back as far as to St. Augustine, who thinks that the Evangelists were acquainted with each other's writings, and were inspired in some respects to supplement them. Thus, in the genealogies, while St. Matthew gives the descent of the Saviour in the royal line, that of Solomon, St. Luke gives the priestly descent, or that which is not royal, through Nathan. St. Mark he regards as simply the abbreviator of St. Matthew. (*De Cons. Ev.* i. 2, § 4). But St. Augustine spares himself the necessity of grappling with the difficulties of this view by confining its expression to a few very general sentences, and by making no attempt to explain in detail why the later writers

made so many changes in the text of the earlier, why they modified, transposed, and omitted, as they have done.

(i.) Here lies the great difficulty which always has accompanied and always must accompany the theory of successive dependence. It imposes upon its holders the necessity of accounting for all the multitude of variations, great and small, in the three Gospels. The coincidences are accounted for easily enough, but to account for the differences is no such easy matter. Whatever is supposed to have been the order of succession, the difficulty remains the same.

Perhaps the commonest assumption is that to which we have just been referring in St. Augustine, that St. Matthew preceded St. Mark, and that they both preceded St. Luke. This has in its favour the traditional order of the Gospels—which is, however, not a primitive order, but one which came to be more and more adopted from the fourth century onwards. This at once raises the question, why did not St. Mark follow more closely in the footsteps of his predecessor? As compared with St. Matthew two things strike us about St. Mark; the one is the omission of a number of incidents and sayings; the other is the tendency to amplify the details of those which remain. In the common sections, St. Mark is nearly always the fuller of the two; but, taken as a whole, his Gospel is the shorter—and it is made shorter by the excision of much that is found in St. Matthew.

Whence these amplifications? and whence these excisions? The tendencies to which they point seem to be rather contradictory to each other. But, in any case, it is extremely hard to supply a motive for them in detail. In one respect, the difficulty is lightened if St. Luke is put before St. Mark. We might then suppose that St. Mark (or the author of the second Gospel, for those who hold this view usually regard the author as anonymous) obtained his greater fulness by combining the expressions used by the two previous Evangelists.

But this recondite process of dovetailing the language of two separate documents is seen, when it comes to be examined, to be, in a high degree, artificial and improbable. And even if it were not so, just in proportion as the one difficulty was lightened the other difficulty would be increased. We should then have all the narratives and sayings in St. Luke added to those in St. Matthew, and we should have to explain how it was that St. Mark came to be so much shorter than either of them. The same kind of perplexities pursue us whatever hypothesis we have recourse to. If we put St. Mark first on the list, or St. Luke, their incidence may vary somewhat, but their amount is not diminished.

(ii.) It is true that one systematic attempt has been made to supply a motive for the variations in the Synoptic Gospels—the attempt connected with the name of Dr. Ferdinand Christian Baur (died 1860), a writer distinguished as much for width of view and command of daring hypothesis as for lucidity of exposition. The key to unlock the intricacies of the problem he found in the *party leanings* of the authors of the Gospels.

Parties certainly there were in the Apostolic age as much as in any subsequent period of the Church's history; and no one has ever brought out their significance more clearly than Baur did. At the root of them all was the great division of Jew and Gentile. Converts from Judaism and converts from Gentile heathenism came to Christianity with such very different antecedents that it was impossible that they should at once see eye to eye with one another. Most of all was this rendered impossible by the fact that the Jew regarded himself as occupying an altogether higher platform than the Gentile; the Gentiles were described by the sweeping designation of "sinners" (Gal. ii. 15); the Jew was a member of the chosen people, heir to all the promises.

The two bodies had this much in common, that both confessed Jesus to be the Messiah; but that left a number of questions still open. On what terms were Gentiles to be admitted? The Mosaic law had not been formally abrogated. What degree of compliance with that law was to be required of them? We cannot fail to see that questions like these left room for great differences of opinion. Such differences no doubt existed, from the extremes of strictness and exclusiveness among the partisans of Judaism, to the extremes of laxity and latitudinarianism in the converts from heathen religions.

Between these extremes there were a number of intermediate positions of which many traces have come down to us in the pages of the Acts and in the Epistles of St. Paul. Much lively controversy, much open antagonism, split up the Church into sections as widely separated from each other as any that exist in our own day. What wonder if they also left their mark upon the composition of the Gospels?

(iii.) There was a good *prima-facie* case for looking for the indications of party influence. As far back as the second century St. Matthew's Gospel had been regarded as in a special sense the Gospel of the Jews, and St. Luke's as in a special sense the Gospel of the Gentiles; while St. Mark, the associate at once of St. Paul and St. Peter, seemed to stand half-way between the other two. Baur took hold of these admitted facts and developed them with great subtlety and acumen. By means of them he sought to explain the deviations of the evangelical writers from

each other as due to the desire (conscious or unconscious, but for the most part conscious) to give effect to their own sympathies and antipathies.

The Particularist author of the first Gospel laid stress on the fulfilment of prophecy, on the observance of the Jewish law, on the privileges and claims of Israel, on the "holy city," Jerusalem, and the like. The Universalist author of the third Gospel preached a doctrine almost like that of St. Paul, a doctrine of free forgiveness extended to the outcast and undeserving, not confined to the Jews, but open to the Samaritan and even to the Gentile; sayings like that relating to the permanence of the Mosaic law were quietly dropped; the gap which separated the Old Dispensation from the New was widened. The first and the third Gospels thus stood opposed to each other; the function of the second Gospel was that of mediation and conciliation. A phrase was omitted here, another was softened there, so as to avoid offending the susceptibilities of either party, and to promote that policy of union or fusion on which was to be built the structure of the Catholic Church.

(iv.) Even so, the problem with which Baur and his followers had to deal was not a simple one. The phenomena were not all of one kind. It was true that Particularist expressions might be quoted from St. Matthew, and Universalist expressions from St. Luke, but the parts were sometimes interchanged. St. Matthew spoke of many coming from the east and from the west and sitting down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom were cast into outer darkness (Matt. viii. 11, 12). It is he who records the threat that the Kingdom of God should be taken away from the Jews and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matt. xxi. 43); he who commemorates the curse which the Jews invoke upon themselves and upon their children (Matt. xxvii. 25); and he finally who alone gives the express command to "make disciples of every nation" (Matt. xxvii. 19).

On the other hand, St. Luke contains even more allusions than St. Matthew to the ardent expectations among the Jews at the time of Christ's birth: "Looking for the consolation of Israel," "for the redemption of Jerusalem," "for the kingdom of God," "restoring the kingdom to Israel," are his phrases and not St. Matthew's (Luke ii. 25, 38; xxiii. 51; cf. Acts i. 6); it is he and not St. Matthew who speaks of the "daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound" (Luke xiii. 16), and of scrupulous observers of the law like Zacharias and Simeon (Luke i. 6; ii. 25).

(v.) It was not easy to fit these diverse tendencies into the same framework. The Gospels could not be treated as indivisible

wholes; they were not all of a piece. The dependence of one upon the other could not be a dependence of the complete Gospels as they have come down to us. A process of dissection began, in which the dividing lines were drawn by the tendency observable in the different portions. We must not attempt to follow all the speculative results of this dissecting process. A prominent part in it was played by two rather shadowy documents of which mention was made by early writers: one was the so-called Gospel according to the Hebrews, the other was a peculiar abridgment of St. Luke said to have been used by the Gnostic Marcion.

A Gospel according to the Hebrews would naturally represent the earliest stage of evangelical composition. At the opposite pole to this would naturally be the work approved by one who accepted only the writings of St. Paul, and hated everything that savoured of Judaism. Given these two documents, it would not be difficult to conceive how they might be built up into our present Gospels by gradual accretions and modifications. For such a process time was necessary; and the Tübingen School, as it was called, from its headquarters in the University of Tübingen where Baur was professor, did not hesitate to draw freely upon time. It supposed that the Synoptic Gospels did not reach their present shape until the period 130—170 A.D., when the unmistakable allusions to them first begin.

(vi.) We must not stay to point out the impossibilities in this construction of history. An alternative scheme, which seeks to evade those impossibilities, will be presented shortly. Enough to remark that the theory is no longer that of "successive dependence." It has become a form of the theory of "documentary sources," in which the leading feature is that the modifications introduced into those sources are supposed to be due to the dogmatic leanings of the writers, who one after another reviewed and recast them.

(vii.) The theory so conceived was far too one-sided to account for the facts. On the one hand, it led to many strained and far-fetched interpretations. Dogmatic leanings were suspected everywhere, not only in places which really involved doctrine, but in others which were guiltless of any such intention. The Evangelists were transformed from chroniclers not devoid of art of a simple, Oriental, or Hellenistic kind, into nineteenth-century pamphleteers; or rather pamphleteers whose recondite, indirect, and allusive style of recommending their doctrines was that of no century whatever.

The perversion arose from attempting to make a single cause do duty for a number of causes. It was natural that the writers

or compilers of our Gospels should be influenced by their attitude towards the leading questions of their own day. A certain proportion of the variations in the Gospels can be accounted for in this manner, but by no means all of them. The critic must keep his eye open to all the influences at work, and must not allow himself to lay an exaggerated stress upon one to the exclusion of the rest.

(viii.) The theory of Baur was, as we have seen, the most elaborate attempt to explain the variations in the Gospels, on the hypothesis of the successive dependence of one upon the other or others. Even it did not represent that hypothesis in a pure form. The truth was, that it was beset by such fundamental difficulties, that as soon as it came to be applied in detail it was seen to be impossible. The hypothesis of the general dependence of the successive Gospels upon each other is now nearly extinct, if not quite. Even in the qualified form in which it was held by the Tübingen critics, it has been for some time on the decline. It has met with the fate of many other theories. The elements of truth in it have been absorbed in the common stock of knowledge, while its own adherents have borrowed freely from rival systems.

(ix.) There is just one modified application of the dependence-theory which still retains its vitality. Of recent years there has been a growing tendency among some leading critics to believe that St. Luke had before him the works of both his predecessors. This, however, is combined with a form of the documentary hypothesis: although these critics assume that St. Luke had access to our present Gospel of St. Matthew, they only suppose him to have made a quite subordinate and subsidiary use of it. The real foundation of St. Luke's Gospel they regard as laid in other documents, but they think that the Evangelist either occasionally glanced into the finished work that has come down to us, or at least had seen it and was affected by his recollection of it.

2. *The Hypothesis of Oral Tradition.*—The inherent and insuperable objection to the dependence-theory is that, while it accounts readily enough for the resemblances of the three Gospels to each other, it does not account, and really makes it impossible to account, for their differences. The theory of oral tradition is just the opposite of this. It accounts for the differences. The question is, can it also account for the resemblances?

(i.) Of course, any theory as to the origin of the Gospels must start from oral tradition. "The Gospel" at first meant, not anything written, but preaching by word of mouth; it was the "glad tidings of good things." This oral teaching had too, at first, a

different content from our written Gospels. That Jesus of Nazareth was the long-expected Messiah; that He was also in a wider sense the Son of God; that He died for our sins; that He rose again the third day; that He would come a second time to judge the earth—were the propositions with which it was chiefly concerned.

These propositions are the basis of the body of theology in St. Paul's Epistles. We can see that they were the points on which he was in the habit of insisting; but we can see further that they were no peculiar property of his, but that he shared them with the rest of the Apostles, and with all other Christian teachers. They are the hinges on which Christianity as a system of doctrine turns. He who could really take them into his heart and soul did not need to "know Christ after the flesh." And yet such more mundane knowledge could not but have the deepest interest and fascination for Christians. St. Paul was a believer of very exceptional mould. He was capable of embracing an abstraction with an intensity of fervour which few others could give. The mass of mankind craved for something concrete.

In order to become loyal subjects of the Messiah it was necessary that they should know what manner of man He was when He walked the earth. Only so could their full enthusiasm be called out. Nor were they more eager to hear than the Apostles and others who had actually accompanied with the Lord would be eager to teach. This would be especially the case in the mother church of Jerusalem, where the greater number of the Apostles and of the original disciples were gathered together, and where the Christian community were most settled and of longest standing. Here it was less necessary to "lay again the foundation" of moral and religious teaching. There would be time to enlarge more fully upon the details of the Lord's life. We can imagine how knots of interested listeners would collect round the members of that little company who had themselves seen the Lord, and heard and could repeat His words. Meantime they were in close and constant intercourse with each other. Particulars that were known to one would soon become the common property of all. So would gradually grow up a more or less fixed cycle of narration. The oft-told story would have a tendency to stereotype itself. The same incidents, the same sayings would find their way into it whoever was the narrator.

And all this would be oral. It was not the custom of the Jews to commit what they had to say to writing. A Rabbi discoursing and his pupils listening, was the established method of communicating knowledge. Nor were they attended by the shorthand

writer who figures so often in Greek and Roman reports. The Jew was constantly practising his memory, and to memory he trusted. The teachers who day after day rehearsed some portion or other of the sacred history, and the bystanders who carried away fragments of it, were only doing what their countrymen were in the habit of doing. Some would come and go; new converts would be made among the pilgrims who came up to the feasts; even the Apostles had their "circuits" and longer journeyings (Acts ix. 32; Gal. ii. 11; 1 Cor. ix. 5), and yet there would be a sufficient number of permanent residents to keep up the continuity of the narration, and to prevent it from wandering far from the type to which they were accustomed.

(ii.) There are then quite sufficient reasons for thinking that the Gospel story would not merely circulate in an indefinite variety of forms, but that it would crystallise after one particular pattern. And when the troubles which preceded the great catastrophe began to thicken, and the circle of the Apostles was broken up, and the Church received its warning to flee from the doomed city; when the conditions under which the oral narrative had taken shape were ceasing to exist, and the necessity arose for written documents, it was natural that those who undertook the composition of these documents should try to embody as much as they could of what had now become a recognised and standard type of narration.

(iii.) Such is the historical basis on which rests the theory of oral tradition. The common element in our three Gospels is accounted for by the fact that they all drew from the same tradition, while the variable element is only such as might be expected from the different positions of the different writers, and the special sources to which they each had access.

(iv.) There can be no doubt that the Gospels were composed under peculiar conditions, and conditions which prepare us for a greater amount of resemblance than would be usual in three independent biographies of the same person. But is this a quite adequate explanation of the degree and kind of resemblance which we actually find? Many eminent English scholars, and some foreign scholars, think that it is. We will not take upon ourselves to gainsay them; but it is at least right that the reader should realise the full extent of the phenomena which have to be accounted for.

It is not only that the same incidents are chosen for narration, and those incidents, as it would seem, a selection from a much larger mass, the rest of which is passed over in silence. There can be no question that our Lord wrought many miracles and

spoke many parables which have not been recorded. He reminded Chorazin and Bethsaida of the "mighty works" which had been done in them, yet no one of all those mighty works has found its way into the Gospels; but for this one sentence the very names of these cities, as scenes of His ministry, would be unknown. "How often," He says, had He tried to gather together the children of Jerusalem; yet so far as we can tell from any direct statement in the Synoptic Gospels, the occasion on which He said this was the first on which He had paid a visit to Jerusalem since His baptism. St. John, at the end of his Gospel, after he has himself largely supplemented the synoptic narrative, adds with a pardonable hyperbole, that so much still remained which Jesus did, that if it were all to be written down, "the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."

These are only a few proofs among many, that the Synoptic Gospels omitted far more than they recorded; and yet the framework of the narrative is practically the same in all three; it consists very largely both of the same events and of the same discourses. This, however, is not all; not only is the selection of incidents fundamentally the same, but the order in which they are related has a like fundamental identity, and the words in which they are told remarkably agree.

(v.) The identity of order is somewhat disguised and only reveals itself to attentive study. If we wish to discover the succession of incidents which the three Evangelists had before them, we must look for it in St. Mark. It is true both St. Matthew and St. Luke diverge considerably from this, but a comparison of the three Gospels shows that where they do so it was for some special reason. In spite of their divergence it is clear that they were acquainted with St. Mark's order, and that they were content to follow it whenever it did not interfere with some peculiarity of structure of their own.

The Gospel of St. Mark may be divided into three sections, the first of which ends at iii. 6, the second at vi. 13, while the third extends from that point to xvi. 8, which forms the close of the Gospel in an important group of authorities. Now in the first of these sections St. Matthew diverges, but the order of St. Mark is substantially that of St. Luke; in the third section St. Luke diverges, but again St. Mark agrees substantially with St. Matthew. In the intervening section, iii. 7—vi. 13, the relations are not so consistent, but even here St. Mark is supported for three or four consecutive paragraphs at a time, first by one of the companion Gospels and then by the other. There could hardly be more satisfactory proof that the order of St.

Mark really underlies and is presupposed in the other two Gospels.

We can see, too, why they depart from it. It is characteristic of St. Matthew to group events and discourses. But between Matthew iii., where the threefold narrative begins, and the end of Matthew xiii., there are three such groups of discourse (the sermon on the Mount, the discourse at the sending out of the Apostles, and the collection of parables in chap. xiii.), and one group of representative incidents (those contained in Matthew viii., ix.). It is this massing of similar matter which causes St. Matthew to desert the common order. Again, the most distinctive feature in the Gospel of St. Luke is the "great insertion" (Luke ix. 51—xviii. 14). Such a wholesale importation into the text which the third Evangelist had before him naturally led to much dislocation. This and the special knowledge which St. Luke displays of matters relating to the court of the Herods, sufficiently account for the greater part of his divergence.

(vi.) The order of St. Mark is the fundamental order. If that order had simply followed the chronology of the events, that would not have been so very surprising. But those who have looked into the matter agree that though St. Mark retains, roughly speaking, the outline of our Lord's ministry, his order is yet not entirely chronological. There is an element of artificial combination about it as well. Can we think that so fixed and peculiar an order as this would be given merely by oral tradition? Is it not the more probable view that the first and the third Evangelists had before them something like it in writing?

(vii.) If we lean to that conclusion, we shall see a confirmation of it in the verbal coincidences between the three Gospels. The extent of these coincidences may be seen set forth with great exactness in Mr. Rushbrook's sumptuous "Synopticon" (London, 1880—81). It has been calculated that the Gospel of St. Mark contains in all 11,158 words. Of these no less than 6,618 are common to one or both of the other two Gospels. More exactly, 2,651 are found in all three Gospels, 2,793 in St. Mark and St. Matthew, 1,174 in St. Mark and St. Luke.* Is that a proportion which we should expect to exist in three independent biographies, no matter how closely connected by common matter? Here again, too, we observe that the coincidences do not occur at random, but that St. Mark is the meeting-point of the other two Gospels as regards diction, just as he is the meeting-point between them as regards order. Once more the relation between

* Schaff, "History of the Christian Church," i. 596. f New York, 1882.

the threefold narratives appears to require some more tangible explanation than that supplied by oral tradition. It seems to conduct us up to a written source or sources.

(viii.) We may add to this another objection. The advocates of oral tradition invariably and naturally look to Jerusalem as the home of that tradition. Is it not then strange that it should say so little about the work of our Lord at Jerusalem? Here is a tradition which is supposed to have been formed and circulated for some forty years at Jerusalem, and yet its contents are almost entirely taken up, not with those visits to Jerusalem of which St. John has so much to say, but with the ministry in Galilee. Are these two things easily reconcilable? It does not seem so.

3. *The Hypothesis of Documentary Sources.*—On the continent of Europe, and especially in Germany, the theory that our first three Gospels are derived from some common source or sources has been most in favour of recent years. It seems beforehand to hold out a better prospect than either of the competing theories can do, of doing justice to both sides of the problem. The coincidences, whether of selection, of order, or of expression, are at once naturally and simply accounted for if a common document or documents lie at the base of all three Gospels. Nor do the differences cause any real difficulty if we allow (1) for the possession by each Evangelist of some special sources of information besides those which he has in conjunction with his fellows, and (2) for the natural idiosyncrasies of style and mode of treatment.

(i.) There is this difference between the theory which we have now before us and the other two, that whereas they take our present Gospels as they are, and in the case of the dependence-theory account for the form which they have assumed by direct modifications of the earlier Gospels in the later, and in the case of the oral theory, make them grow immediately and without intervening breaks out of the common ground-stock of tradition, the theory with which we are now dealing confessedly goes behind our present Gospels and accounts for the phenomena which they present by means of certain hypothetical documents which are supposed to have existed antecedently to them.*

(ii.) The mere fact that the documents are hypothetical—that they are found in no extant MS., and that their text cannot be

* It should be observed that though the common names "St. Matthew" and "St. Mark" are used, it is not intended to prejudge the question whether *the whole* of our first and second Gospels is the work respectively of St. Matthew and St. Mark. In any case it is the opinion of the present writer that the third Gospel came as we have it from the pen of St. Luke; and in regard to the other two Gospels he has tried to state the probabilities

appealed to—will be a strong presumption against them to many minds. Those who have had much to do with the criticism of ancient writings will estimate that presumption differently. Only the other day we had a brilliant instance in which a purely hypothetical and imaginary document had its existence verified. It is well known that the “Didaché” or “Doctrine of the Apostles” had been substantially reconstructed from the “Apostolic Constitutions” and other later writings by the Roman Catholic scholar Krawutzcky before there was even a rumour of its actual discovery by Bryennios. The attempted reconstruction of the documents which underlie our Gospels is precisely of the same kind, though it wants the all-important verification!

(iii.) It must not, however, be supposed that these underlying documents are altogether imaginary. The preface to St. Luke’s Gospel expressly tells us that many other biographies were in existence when he undertook to write his. And the great majority of those who hold the documentary theory believe that they have a description of their two principal documents in two often-quoted fragments of the sub-apostolic writer Papias preserved by Eusebius.

(iv.) For all this, which may be true but in any case holds out matter for much discussion, we must not seem to suggest that the documentary hypothesis is easy of proof or one about which scholars are by any means agreed. Once more we have the difference between a statement in general terms and proof in detail. General statements may sound very plausible and attractive, but it is another matter when they come to be confronted with the texts and applied verse by verse. Many who are agreed in contending that some form of the documentary hypothesis is a necessity are by no means agreed as to the particular form which they would adopt.

We cannot here pretend to enumerate all these forms. Suffice it to say that the great majority of the current theories proceed upon the assumption of an original Matthew older than our present St. Matthew, and (under different names and differing in its extent) an original Mark older than our present St. Mark. Papias, as we have just seen, speaks of the work of the first two Evangelists in terms which are thought to apply better to documents which may be believed to be incorporated in our present Gospels than to the actual Gospels as we have them. We reserve the fuller discussion of this point for the individual chapters on St. Matthew and St. Mark.

as they appear to him as candidly as he can, but he has not made up, and does not wish to make up, his own mind, until he has studied the question for himself in systematic order and in close detail.

The true ground, however, for the assumption of these older Gospels is not the evidence of Papias, or at least not that taken alone but in connection with the results of an analysis of the texts of the first three Gospels. It does not need a very profound study of these Gospels to see that their contents fall under three heads. (1) From the ministry of the Baptist onwards the main outlines of the history are substantially the same in all three. (2) Interspersed, however, with this, there are a number of scattered coincidences, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, between St. Matthew and St. Luke, which relate for the most part to sayings or discourses. (3) Besides this matter which is common either to all three Gospels or to two out of the three, St. Mark to a very slight extent, and St. Matthew and St. Luke to a much larger extent, have sections peculiar to themselves and standing apart from the main body of the evangelical tradition. Conspicuous examples of this would be the first two chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke.

(v.) As regards that broad substratum of narrative which underlies the greater part of all three Gospels we have already seen that the order of the successive sections is substantially that of St. Mark. The statistics as to diction will also prepare us for the conclusion that here, too, St. Mark contains the largest proportion of the common language. Short as the second Gospel is, this shcrtness is obtained by the absence of whole sections, and not—except in very rare cases—by the abridgment of what remains. Augustine called St. Mark an “epitomator,” but his Gospel is no epitome. When the three narratives are placed side by side his is almost invariably the fullest of the three. It may be well to give an example of this in order that the relations of the three Gospels to each other in this respect may be understood. The resemblances which are indicated by the use of different type are those in the Greek original and not in the English version.

Words printed in **thick type** are common to all three Gospels.

Words printed in **SMALL CAPITALS** are common to St. Matthew and St. Luke.

Words printed in **ROMAN CAPITALS** are common to St. Matthew and St. Mark.

Words printed in **ITALIC CAPITALS** are common to St. Mark and St. Luke.

Words printed in *italics* are peculiar to the Gospel in which they occur.

CALL OF LEVI. FEAST IN LEVI'S HOUSE.

MATTHEW IX. 9—13.

And AS Jesus PASSED BY from thence, HE SAW a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll: and HE SAITH unto him Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

And IT CAME TO PASS, as HE SAT AT MEAT in the house, behold many publicans and SINNERS came and sat DOWN WITH JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES. And WHEN the Pharisees SAW IT, THEY said UNTO his disciples, Why eateth your Master with the publicans and sinners? But when he HEARD IT, he said, They that are WHOLE have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

MARK II. 13—17.

AND HE WENT FORTH again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. And AS HE PASSED BY, HE SAW LEVI the son of Alphæus sitting at the place of toll, and HE SAITH unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. And IT CAME TO PASS that HE was SITTING AT MEAT in HIS house, and many publicans and SINNERS sat DOWN WITH JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES: for there were many and they followed him. And the SCRIBES of the Pharisees, WHEN THEY SAW that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said UNTO his disciples, He eateth AND DRINKETH with publicans and sinners. AND when JESUS HEARD IT, he saith unto THEM, They that are WHOLE have no need of a physician but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

LUKE V. 27—32.

AND after these things HE WENT FORTH, and beheld a publican, named LEVI, sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him, Follow me. And he forsook all, and rose up and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in HIS house: and there was a great multitude of publicans and of others that were sitting at meat with them. And the Pharisees and their SCRIBES murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat AND DRINK with the publicans and sinners? AND JESUS answering said unto THEM, They that are whole have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

(vi.) This may be taken as a fair average sample of the three-fold narrative. It presents in a sufficiently distinct form the kind of phenomena that are usually found elsewhere. For our purpose the most important feature is that which is expressed by the two kinds of larger capitals. These show how the language of St. Mark appears alternately in the other two Gospels. It will be seen that the instances in which this is the case very greatly preponderate over those (expressed by small capitals) in which the two other Gospels, St. Matthew and St. Luke, combine against St. Mark.

(vii.) Thus both the order of the narratives and the language in which they are couched converge upon the same conclusion. They seem to prove that St. Mark has preserved more nearly than either of his fellow Evangelists the original form of that common authority (whatever it was) which lies at the base of the whole evangelical tradition. If we assume that this common authority was something nearly resembling our present St. Mark we can then explain both the parallel columns from St. Matthew and St. Luke. Two writers, both copying independently, and both copying freely from the same source, would naturally reproduce different features characteristic of that source: one set of expressions would appear in the one, another set of expressions would appear in the other.

The alternative hypothesis, that the text of St. Mark was made up by taking here a word from St. Matthew and there a word from St. Luke, implies a process that really is not credible. And what applies to the diction of the parallel sections applies quite as clearly to their order. The inference has been contested, but it is one that every day is receiving a greater amount of recognition, that the common foundation of the Synoptic Gospels must be sought in close connection with St. Mark. Whether that foundation was an oral tradition, or whether it was a written document, in either case St. Mark has reproduced it most exactly.

(viii.) It would greatly simplify matters if we could go a step farther and say not only that this foundation was to be sought in connection with St. Mark, but that it was St. Mark as we have it: in other words, if this relation which we have seen to be so preponderant was not merely preponderant, but an absolutely constant relation. Unfortunately it is not this. In the passage which we have just analysed, and more or less throughout the Gospel, there are words, phrases, clauses, sentences which would have on our plan to be printed in small capitals, as representing an agreement between St. Matthew and St. Luke against St. Mark.

(ix.) Here is one of the great perplexities of Synoptic criticism. If the proposed solutions of this part of the problem seem difficult and far-fetched, these phenomena are mainly the cause. We will mention a few such solutions without discussing them, which would take up much space and lead to no assured and final result.

(a) The original document which all three Evangelists are following was somewhat fuller than our present St. Mark, and contained those expressions which have dropped out of our St. Mark, though they are retained by St. Matthew and St. Luke.

(b) Our St. Mark is a composite work, and embodies to a subordinate extent another document, which is reproduced more exactly in St. Matthew and St. Luke.

(c) St. Luke, though following in the main a document like our St. Mark, had also had sight of our St. Matthew, and introduced some expressions from it.

This is the position in which the question stands at the present moment, and the ultimate answer to it cannot yet be foreseen; it will need very close and careful examination.

Under the second head (b) we placed those passages which were found in St. Matthew and St. Luke, but which were absent from St. Mark. It is not absolutely necessary that all these passages should have the same origin. By far the majority of them, however, are similar in kind, consisting of discourse rather than of narrative. Now a possible interpretation of the language of Papias was that St. Matthew wrote a "collection of discourses." If this were granted, then the hypothesis lay near at hand that the discourses found alike in St. Matthew and St. Luke were taken from this primitive collection, the true work of the publican-Apostle. And it would also be an easy step to explain the attribution of the first Gospel to St. Matthew as due to the fact that it embodied so much of that work, on the principle *nominetur a potiori*.

Here again was a solution in which there was much that was attractive. But again it is necessary to suspend judgment. Once more the statement in general terms is a different thing from the detailed testing. The task has been attempted with commendable zeal, diligence, and courage, but it is by no means easy to reconstruct this original "collection of discourses," and to give an intelligible account of the manner in which it came to assume the form it does in the first and third Gospels. This is another question which must be regarded as still *sub judice*.

(x.) The portions of each Gospel which are peculiar to that Gospel are less difficult to deal with. In any case they would owe their present shape to the final editor. Within limits, we can form a probable conjecture as to whether they were originally oral tradition or written. The strongly Hebraistic bias of the first two chapters of St. Luke make us suspect that the writer had a Palestinian document before him. At the same time the presence of so many touches of style which are characteristic of the author of the third Gospel and the Acts induces us to believe that he worked up the contents of this document in language that was largely his own. On the other hand, the allusions (which all hang together) to facts connected with the court of

the Herods clearly rest on information the source of which would be oral.

The theory as a whole no doubt leaves unsolved problems. It is only thought that these are on the whole fewer and less formidable than those which attach to other theories. Time alone and critical investigation can dispose of them.

4. *Date and Historical Character of the Gospels.*—The main cause of the obscurity which hangs over the origin of the Gospels is the multiform and apparently conflicting character of the data. Even where the evidence distinctly preponderates in one direction, there will still be some residuary phenomena which point in another. If a number of arguments tell in favour of written documents as the base of the common tradition, others still remain which seem to raise a presumption that the original tradition was oral; if five out of six of the data point to the priority of St. Mark, the sixth will seem to give precedence to St. Matthew or St. Luke; if it is difficult to think that our first Gospel as a whole lay before the author of the third, there are yet some places which hardly seem as if they could be independent of each other.

(i.) In regard to the date of the Gospels something of the same state of things obtains, though in a modified degree. We can assert with great confidence that the mass of our Synoptic Gospels, even if not actually committed to writing, had at least assumed its present form before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. That event was a dividing line in the history of the Church such as it has perhaps never seen since. The year 70 saw a fugitive little community at Pella, which was nearly all that remained of the Hebrew-born and Hebrew- or Aramaic-speaking Christians. Meantime in Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, in Rome itself, and if not already, yet within a very short time, in Egypt, Gentile Christianity was advancing “by leaps and bounds.”

The Church had no longer a fixed centre and metropolis; its leaders were scattered to the four winds, and the daughter churches vied with each other in the vigour and elasticity of their growth. Where there had once been a single centre, now there were a number of centres, and it seemed quite an open question which would command the rest. Christianity at this moment was a *diaspora* without Jerusalem, even without Palestine. If ever any one thing could be pronounced impossible, it is that our Gospels should have arisen under such conditions. They are Jewish to the core, not in the sense that they do not transcend Judaism, but that their *root* is firmly planted in Judaism, however much they may pass out beyond it.

We need not perhaps deny that some forlorn seeker among the ruins might have hit upon the rather recondite details of topography that are found in the Synoptic Gospels, on Chorazin and Bethsaida, Bethany and Bethphage, Nain and Emmaus. He might have caught and reproduced those treating of Syrian peasant life, which were not peculiar to a single generation. The fishermen on the Sea of Galilee (though sad havoc must have been made among them by the war), with their casting-nets and drag-nets; the toll-office; the labourers waiting to be hired, and then working through the hot wind in the vineyard; the ceremony of a Jewish funeral, the bier and the paid mourners; the lepers and possessed who were so common an object of pity or repulsion; the different grades of officials of various kinds—not only the ordinary toll-collectors but their chiefs (Luke xix. 2), not only the members of the committee of the synagogue, but the one in particular who regulated its services (Matt. ix. 18; Mark v. 22), the verger or attendant who brought out the sacred roll and gave it to or received it from the reader (Luke iv. 20), the local courts, the high court (Matt. v. 22), the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. Many even of these details would hardly have come naturally to a Christian of the generation which followed the extinction of Jewish independence. Nor should we expect such a one to draw those graphic pictures of the Pharisees in the height of their power and glory, "making broad their phylacteries," praying ostentatiously at the corners of the streets, going up with parade to the Temple, pronouncing some meats clean and others unclean, prescribing ablutions, evading the law on which they laid such stress by their casuistical distinctions.

All these things we cannot but feel are drawn from the life; and still more from the life, and only from the life, could a Christian writer depict the Master whose name he bore, in conflict with these men, called like them "Rabbi," but arraigning their dearest principles; exposing their hollowness and formalism; propounding larger and higher views of the Sabbath, of marriage and divorce, of the resurrection, yet pursued by them with the same casuistry which they practised among themselves, in the hope that He might be caught tripping; asked his opinion about "bills of divorce," about Satanic agency in the casting out of devils, about the position of the woman in a case of Levirate marriage, and about the reconciling of a passage in the Old Testament which spoke of the Messiah at once as "Lord" and "Son."

Least of all would any Christian of this later date have reproduced as our Evangelists have done so many phases in the history of the Messianic expectation and its gradually revealed fulfil-

ment; now writing entirely from the point of view of a Jew with his particularist notions about the "consolation of Israel," the "redemption of Jerusalem," the "kingdom" promised to the chosen people; now presenting the idea as a subject of debate and question—Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah, or was He the prophet spoken of in Deuteronomy; or was He Elijah who was to precede and prepare the way for the Messiah? Did not the Baptist himself express a doubt as to whether He was the Expected One or no?—And even when he is asserting the claim which Christ really made, letting it be seen how widely the idea as represented by Him differed from the ordinary conception—a Messiah who did not "strive or cry or lift up his voice in the streets"; a Messiah whom no one had constituted "a judge or a divider" (Luke xii. 14); a Messiah who rode in triumph into Jerusalem upon an ass, and there suffered the enthusiasm of His followers to melt away; who bade the loyal adherent who would have fought for Him sheathe his sword, and who put the climax to His own life by dying like any other victim of Roman oppression upon the cross.

(ii.) The great bulk of the Gospel narrative thus bears its date upon its face as distinctly as if the writers had signed their names at the foot of it. Theories which would throw the composition of the Gospels into the second century are simply wide of the mark. At that interval of time and at that stage of the Church's history the conditions which our Gospels presuppose no longer existed. And yet, although this is the case, there are touches in them here and there which appear to date not before but after the taking of Jerusalem.

In reproducing the language of prophecy it is natural that a writer should allow his reproduction to be coloured by his own relation to the fulfilment of that prophecy. From this point of view it has been often remarked that the three Gospels practically date themselves. When St. Matthew records the events which were to attend the taking of Jerusalem he does so evidently with an eye to his own readers. When the abominable thing—the unclean Roman standards—invades the sanctity of the Temple, that is to be a signal for Christians to fly with all speed, and they will pray that their flight may not be in the winter or on the Sabbath, for an impeded or shortened journey will not carry them quickly enough beyond the reach of danger. It is clear from this that when it was written the catastrophe was near at hand. But it had not yet actually come; because St. Matthew, as he goes on, puts no interval between that catastrophe and the end of the world: "*Immediately after the tribulation of these days the sun shall be darkened,*" &c. (Matt. xxiv. 29).

St. Mark apparently wrote a little later: he still expects the end of the world to follow quickly, but he does not regard it as simultaneous with the fall of Jerusalem: "*In those days, after that tribulation,*" &c. (Mark xiii. 24). By the time that St. Luke is writing the taking of Jerusalem is an event in the past: his description is no longer couched in general terms but is full of precise detail suggested by the facts as they actually happened—the compassing with armies, the vallum thrown up to complete the investment, the utter destruction, the massacre, dispersion, and enslavement which follow, while Jerusalem is trodden underfoot of the Gentiles "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xix. 42—44, compared with xxi. 20—24). In those very "times of the Gentiles" St. Luke was writing, expecting (but in vain) that they would pass away.

It has been often supposed, especially by English writers, that the Acts of the Apostles was composed at the point of time with which it ends: if so, it was natural to infer that the Gospel was written somewhat earlier, which would bring it about to the years 60 or 61. But apart from the argument of which we have just been speaking, the preface to the Gospel demolishes every such supposition. It implies a far more advanced stage of Gospel-writing than can have been possible at such a date. It would make St. Luke an older Gospel not only than St. Matthew and St. Mark but even (if those Gospels are based upon antecedent documents) older than the documents out of which they were composed—a *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole theory. The true date of St. Luke must be placed at a substantial interval after the taking of Jerusalem—say, about the year 80. There is nothing in the data which conflicts with this.

In regard to St. Matthew and St. Mark the case is not quite so clear. The phenomena are not all strictly of a piece. The considerations just urged seem fairly decisive in placing the main body of the first Gospel at a measurable distance before the event of A.D. 70; and the main body of the second Gospel within nearer sight of that event. At the same time we have seen that viewed on the side of their literary relations to each other the second Gospel may claim a certain priority. There are, too, single expressions (like "the king was wroth and sent his armies and slew those murderers, and burnt up their city," in Matt. xxii. 7), which seem to look back upon the destruction of Jerusalem. How these apparent contradictions are to be reconciled is a part of the problem which still seeks solution.

5. *History of the Use and Canonical Reception of the Gospels.*—The desired solution may perhaps be found when we come to consider the circumstances under which the Gospels were first put into cir-

culation. We cannot suppose that there was any formal publication such as took place in the case of Greek or Roman classics at this date, when the author publicly recited his new piece in a lecture-hall filled with his friends and admirers, and when some famous publisher like Atticus undertook to have it copied in wholesale quantities and launched upon the market. The early Christians had command of no such machinery. They were as a rule drawn from the poorer classes. Many of them must have been illiterate. The few who distinguished themselves by composition had picked up the art as it were by the wayside—in some public office like the collecting of market dues and tolls, or in the ranks of a provincial profession. We are not to think of authors like these as surrounded by the shorthand writers and caligraphers who attended upon the literary men of Rome or Alexandria, who took down and transcribed their productions in clear and beautiful characters like those of the Bankesian Iliad or of the famous "Codex Vaticanus."

Many signs point to the conclusion that the period of greatest activity in the composition of Gospels included the years just before and just after the fall of Jerusalem—an anxious and troubled period, when the wisest course for Christians was to avoid public notice as much as possible. Under these circumstances of constraint and secrecy the Gospels were written, very probably on rough material, with linked letters, not exactly in the later cursive hand, but in the hand used for everyday business transactions, which fell some way short of the purity and clearness of the book-hand. So written, the first copies would be passed about privately from hand to hand, often suffering in the process, and becoming more degenerate as bad copies were propagated. This would account for the many variants that are found in the early texts.

But there is one particular feature which we must keep specially in view. The private persons who possessed and circulated these copies, and even the church officers who from time to time had charge of them, would not feel exactly bound by the obligations of professional copyists. They would not reject an opportunity of enriching their MS. with additions from the oral tradition, which, if they were not part of the original Gospel, might have been, so far as their contents were concerned, and were very possibly quite as authentic. In this way not a few slight but deeply interesting and important additions have come down to us which are wanting in what we call "the best MSS.," and upon the purest line of transmission, but which for all that we may be very glad to have preserved.

Nor can we suppose that the same persons who accepted these

additions would feel themselves debarred from making other seemingly trivial alterations so as to give greater point to an expression or to clear up an obscurity. Some such small changes may have been made in copies so early that all trace of their origin had been lost. The autographs of the Gospels, written on fragile papyrus and much used, soon perished, and these interpolated copies alone became the parents of that long succession which has come down to us.

Started thus upon their career, the Gospels were yet not at first the same exclusive authority which they soon became. They were read in the churches; they were doubtless used in catechetic instruction; and they must have been often eagerly studied by private individuals. But the written Gospel had to compete with another source of information which had not yet run dry. The same Papias above mentioned, who gives such interesting if tantalising details about the first two Gospels, records also (but not necessarily in direct antithesis to them) his own preference for what he calls “the living and abiding voice” of oral tradition.

There is no reason to think that he would have valued more highly words which he was assured had been spoken by St. Matthew than words which he knew to have been written by St. Matthew's own hand. He probably had in mind more pretentious and less authentic Gospels, like those used by Basilides and his followers, which had already begun to be current in his day. Even side by side with our present Gospels, there sprang into existence other embellished and apocryphal histories, a growth of tares which in ancient times seldom failed to shoot up round the memory of illustrious lives. But these apocryphal Gospels, connected as they were by many links of genuine tradition with the true Gospels, and some of them even based upon those Gospels, as the Gospel according to the Hebrews on that of St. Matthew, naturally awoke a certain suspicion among the leaders of the Church; and we can understand how a man like Papias would receive with more satisfaction the stories that were told him by venerable persons who had been themselves the contemporaries of Apostles, and whom he could cross-question as to the source from which their narratives were derived.

In any case, for some fifty years after the fall of Jerusalem, there was a concurrent stream of oral tradition side by side with the written Gospels. The Church writers (such as there were, for but few of their remains have come down to us) drew from this stream as well as from the Gospels. And even when they used the Gospels, their use of them seems to have been affected by the fact that they were still in what we may call an oral

period, a period of speech and action rather than of writing. They are apt to trust to memory, and to reproduce freely, as persons quoting from memory will do, giving the sense correctly, but often combining what was found in one Gospel with what was found in another, and, like the New Testament writers themselves, not seldom mixing together passages more or less widely separated in the original.

To the period of which we are speaking belong the Apostolic Fathers, as they are called, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Barnabas, Hermas, and the newly recovered "Doctrine of the Apostles." The chief writer of the next period is Justin Martyr, whose "Apology" falls about 150 A.D. Nearly of the same date is the so-called Second Epistle of Clement, which, since the missing portion has been added to it, is seen to be really the earliest existing specimen of a Christian homily. With Justin may be also bracketed his disciple Tatian.

There can be no doubt that Justin quotes, and quotes largely, from our present Gospels, as a number of the distinctive expressions and details of each reappear in his pages. He is fond of the title "Memoirs of the Apostles," by which he usually refers to our Gospels; and he appears to be acquainted with the tradition which connects the Gospel of St. Mark specially with St. Peter. A large part of the Synoptic narrative might be reproduced, in outline at least, from Justin. Justin, however, still makes a subordinate use either of oral tradition or of an Apocryphal Gospel, perhaps of both. His contemporary, the author of the Second Epistle of Clement, along with a number of unmistakable quotations from St. Matthew and St. Luke, also openly quotes apocryphal authorities, of which the Gospel according to the Egyptians is one. We are still, it will be seen, in a period of transition. Though the authority of our Gospels is firmly rooted, it is still shared by others.

They are, however, gradually becoming separated from the rest, and acquiring a character of exceptional sacredness. A writer like Papias is careful to vindicate the historical accuracy of St. Mark, but he does so in a way which might apply to any other historian. The exceptional and sacred character attached at first, not to any particular record, but to the "sayings of the Lord" in themselves. To these sayings the writers of the first generation after the Apostles were wont to give a name which well expressed their conception of them. They called them "Oracles." Like the utterances of the Pythoness at Delphi, they were brief in form, but charged with concentrated meaning, and they carried a more than human authority.

There is, indeed, some difference of opinion as to the extent of

the application of this name "Oracles." Many would apply it to the complete Gospels as we have them; but it seems better, at least in the majority of the places where it is used, to understand by it rather the "Gospel within the Gospel," the actual sayings and discourses of the Lord. "His words are short and concise," says Justin, "for He was no sophist, but His speech was the power of God."*

It was in the struggle with heresy that the position of the Canonical Gospels came to be gradually defined. The Gnostics, whose greatest activity falls in the first half of the second century, made especial use of Gospels which they either composed or interpolated and otherwise tampered with, so as to make them convey their doctrines. It was a work of this kind which was used in the Homily ascribed to Clement. But the leaders of the Church entered upon a struggle with Gnosticism, and they took steps to guard against its insinuating itself in this way. They adopted in spirit the Talmudical motto, "to make a fence round the law." They drew the cordon more and more closely round those Gospels which seemed to them free from heretical taint, and which they conceived to rest upon the best authority.

It was in the age of Justin that this process was going on. It must have proceeded with great rapidity, for by the time of Irenæus it was not only complete, but it was treated as if it had been some time complete, the established law of the Church. There is a famous passage in the third book of Irenæus "Against Heresies" which was written about the year 185. It is worth while to quote this passage, as it shows what was the tone of thought at this date in the Church on the subject of the Gospels. The "fourfold Gospel" is no novelty, but has its settled place in the mystical order and constitution of things.

"Forasmuch as there are four quarters of the world in which we live, as there are also four universal winds, and as the Church is scattered over all the earth, and the Gospel is the pillar and base of the Church and the breath (or spirit) of life, it is likely that it should have four pillars breathing immortality on every side, and kindling afresh the life of men. Whence it is evident that the Word, the architect of all things, who sitteth upon the cherubim and holdeth all things together, having been made manifest unto men, gave us the Gospel in a fourfold shape, but held together by one Spirit. As David, entreating for His presence, saith, 'Thou that sitteth upon the cherubim show Thyself.' For the cherubim are of fourfold visage, and their visages are symbols of the economy of the Son of Man. . . . And the Gospels therefore agree with them, over which presideth Jesus Christ."

The writer then goes on to apply in detail the symbolism of the cherubim to each in turn of the four Gospels, following an

* "Apol." i 14: comp. Rom. i. 16.

order different from that with which we are now most familiar. St. John he compares to the Lion, St. Luke to the Calf, St. Matthew to the Man, St. Mark to the Eagle. A usage which has reached this reflective and speculative stage is clearly one of long standing.

From the time of Irenæus onwards all obscurity has vanished. Up to Irenæus, or we may say up to the year 185, we are obliged to piece together one item of evidence with another from the scanty literature which has come down to us, and to reconstruct a hypothetical view from imperfect materials. But from the date we have mentioned all becomes clear: evidence pours in on every side. Irenæus, as we have seen, is quite unequivocal. Perhaps a year or two before Irenæus, or just upon the threshold of his great work, comes a remarkable document called from its discoverer the Muratorian Fragment. This fragment is the first canonical list of the Books of the New Testament. It is mutilated at the beginning, but there can be no doubt that it originally contained an enumeration of our four Gospels. Not long after Irenæus is Clement of Alexandria (flourished 193 A.D.); soon after Clement Tertullian (writing 194—221 A.D.); contemporary with Tertullian Hippolytus (died 236 A.D.); and but a little younger than Hippolytus Origen (died 253 A.D.), who again overlaps the Latin writers Novatian and Cyprian (martyred 258 A.D.).

These names stand at the head of a voluminous literature, and their testimony is practically unanimous. The Alexandrian writers are somewhat freer than the rest in their use of extra-canonical books, but their deliberate language is essentially the same. The only Gospels "received without dispute in the Church under heaven"** are our present four.

We need not pursue the history of the reception of the Gospels farther. Its pages are really closed. There has been no appreciable difference in the attitude of the Church towards the Gospels from the Muratorian Fragment to our own day. It is true that in recent years a sharper controversy has gathered round them: their dates, their authorship, their historical character has been questioned. In these questionings criticism and hyper-criticism have been largely mingled, and the end of the process has not yet been reached. Only perhaps we can trace, not expressed in any formula, and often not consciously realised, a sort of silent gravitating towards a view more nearly akin to that of the first age than of subsequent ages; a tendency to treat the Gospels as in the first instance historical authorities for the acts

* Origen, ap. Eus. *H.E.*, vi. 25.

and words of Christ, not altogether perfect or infallible authorities, fragmentary, incomplete, varying from time to time in the nature of their authentication, and embodying along with the facts something also of the conceptions of simple and unscientific minds ; and yet guarded against any wide possibilities of error by the assured primitiveness of their date, bearing on their face a thousand marks which stamp them as the product of a still living and faithful tradition, and guaranteed above all by their consistent presentation of a single unique and commanding figure, which neither their authors nor any other hand of man could have invented. There is a tendency to detach this portrait from its framework, and to see in the Gospels primarily, what Papias and his contemporaries saw in them, the record of “Oracles of the Lord.”

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

1. *Early Statements respecting the Gospel.*—In the preceding chapter mention has several times been made of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, a city not far from Colossæ, in the most flourishing and active part of Phrygia. Two brief statements by Papias exceed in importance all the other early references to our Gospel, partly from their early date and partly from their express character. A slight addition which has been recently made to the extant fragments of Papias would tend to show that he was writing as late as the reign of Antoninus Pius (138—161), or, at least, of Hadrian (117—138). But the passages of which we are speaking cannot well be later than the beginning of Hadrian's reign, as the context implies that Papias himself was not separated by more than a generation from the Apostles, and that some who could speak with an authority almost equal to that of the Apostles still survived. We are thus carried back to the time when so many critical changes were taking place, and when the literature which should have recorded them was so scanty. The statements of Papias have the further advantage of being, not like the references in the few tracts or letters that have come down to us, mere quotations from or side-allusions to the text of unnamed Gospels, but definite affirmations bearing the names which still appear in the titles of our Bibles.

The words of Papias respecting St. Matthew, literally rendered, are as follows:

“Matthew then composed the Oracles of the Lord in the Hebrew tongue, and every one interpreted them as he was able.”

Hebrew means here, not, of course, the Hebrew of the Old Testament, which was by this time a dead language, nor yet the Hebrew of the Talmud, which was the property of a few Rabbis, but the Aramaic vernacular commonly spoken in Palestine.

Papias does not stand alone in asserting that St. Matthew wrote in this dialect: he is only the first of a chain of writers who say the same thing. Origen says it several times: twice in the Commentary on St. John written in 228—231, and once in the Commentary on St. Matthew written in 245—6. This latter passage affirms expressly that St. Matthew wrote “in Hebrew [Aramaic] characters.” Older still than Origen, the first great name in the Alexandrian Church, Pantænus, teacher of Clement, and a contemporary of Irenæus, was reported to have gone as a missionary to “the Indians” (meaning probably the *Homeritæ* in Arabia Felix), and to have found there a copy of St. Matthew’s Gospel “in Hebrew characters” left by St. Bartholomew.

These early authorities are quoted and endorsed by Eusebius (*circa* 324) and Eusebius again by Jerome (392), who claims also to have seen a copy at Bercea, in Syria, though there is much reason to think that in this he is confusing the work of St. Matthew with the apocryphal “Gospel according to the Hebrews.” There is no counter-tradition which at all conflicts with these statements, so that it would not be wrong to say that the universal opinion of antiquity, so far as we have the means of ascertaining that opinion, is that St. Matthew wrote “in Hebrew, for Hebrews,” *i.e.* in Aramaic, for Aramaic-speaking Christians.

2. *Comparison of these Statements with our present Gospel.*—Our next question then is to ask, Does the description thus given fit our present Gospel? Was our Gospel one of the many translations of the Aramaic original into Greek? Such a translation might conceivably have been made by St. Matthew himself, and there are some who believe that it was so made. There is no doubt that Irenæus and Origen had in their minds our present Gospel. There is no doubt that Pantænus also was in the habit of using that Gospel, though what precisely was the document which he found among the Arabians (if he did find it), we have no means of testing. That Papias, too, used our present Gospel is extremely probable. But it should be remembered that he is not sitting down to criticise the text of the Gospel or even to trace its history: he is merely stating an historical fact, traditionally handed down, and referring to times considerably anterior to his own.

Are there valid reasons for supposing that this tradition relates to our Gospel? (i.) Scholars who have examined the subject have not been able to discover in the diction or style of the Gospel any clear proof that it is a translation. There are certain cases of play upon words which rather seem to point to a Greek original. Besides, when the Gospel is compared with the still

extant fragments of an undoubtedly Hebrew or Aramaic work like the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the idioms of the latter are seen to be Hebrew where those of the former are not. (ii.) So far the line of argument is somewhat precarious. There are translations and translations. In some the transfusion of thought and language is much more thorough than in others. But a further examination of our Gospel reveals phenomena which it is more difficult to reconcile with the theory of an Aramaic original. The treatment of Old Testament quotations in the Gospel is peculiar; and a kind of law seems to run through them. Those which occur in the parts of the Gospel which have no parallel, frequently show the influence of the Hebrew, and present many points of contact with the Targums, or Aramaic paraphrases which have preserved for us the traditional interpretations used in our Lord's time in the synagogues.

On the other hand the quotations in those parts of the Gospel which have direct parallels in the other synoptics are taken from the Septuagint. Good examples of the first class would be Matt. ii. 6 (= Micah v. 2), a passage expressly applied to the Messiah in the Targums, and one the form of which bears every appearance of having been influenced by oral paraphrase; and Matt. ii. 23, where "He shall be called a Nazarene" is best explained by a play upon the Hebrew *netser*, "a Branch" (*vide* Isa. xi. 1); Matt. xii. 18–21 = Isa. xlvi. 1–4, which diverges widely from the Greek, is an example of a comment inserted into the body of the Evangelical narrative. Quotations like Matt. xiii. 14, 15, or xv. 4, 8, 9, which belong to the common synoptic matter agree with the Greek. There are some seventeen quotations which are thus common to all three synoptics, besides a number more which are common to St. Matthew and St. Mark, or St. Matthew and St. Luke.

3. *Our present St. Matthew a Composite Work.*—These phenomena, which are clearly marked, strongly suggest the conclusion that our present Gospel is a composite work. We have already seen that this was probably the case from a comparison of the three Gospels with each other, and now our previous argument is confirmed from another side. An analysis of the first Gospel resolves it into three main parts. One of these is the matter peculiar to the Evangelist, a characteristic feature of which we have just been considering. A second comprises the whole framework of narrative from the Baptism of John to the Resurrection. The third consists of certain great blocks of discourse, inserted at intervals in the midst of the narrative. It is hard to believe that the first and second of these parts came originally from the same hand. Some common welding together they have

of course undergone, due to the hand which gave to our Gospel its present shape ; but this superficial adjustment and actual first composition are quite different things.

When the narrative of St. Matthew is closely examined by the side of that of St. Mark, the greater originality of the latter is almost everywhere visible. If not our St. Mark itself, a document very like our St. Mark supplied the base for both the other Gospels. Now, though it is quite within the bounds of possibility that the Apostle Matthew thus reproduced another man's work at second-hand instead of having recourse to his own recollections, it cannot be said that such a hypothesis is probable. Much more probable is it that a later—though not late—writer combined these three disparate elements into one, himself being responsible for the first, and drawing upon other sources for the remaining two. More probable, on one condition, viz., that some good reason can be given for the tradition which connects the name of St. Matthew with the Gospel.

4. *The Collection of Discourses in the Gospel.*—So far we have spoken of two out of the three elements in the Gospel, but we have as yet said very little about the third. When we put aside the preliminary narratives, the most distinctive feature in the first and third Gospels as compared with the second is the much greater amplitude of the discourses contained in them. In the first Gospel these discourses show an even greater art of composition. It is not probable that they were all entirely spoken on the occasions with which they are connected. Some of them could not have been spoken at once at the times to which they are assigned by St. Matthew, and also at those at which they appear in St. Luke. It is clear that in St. Matthew there is a certain amount of grouping ; sayings of similar character are brought into juxtaposition.

With this characteristic of St. Matthew's Gospel in our mind let us look back once more at the testimony of Papias. He says, “Matthew composed the Oracles of the Lord in Hebrew.” We have already admitted that this term “Oracles of the Lord” might mean a complete Gospel, such as we now have. But then we have also seen that it is very doubtful that St. Matthew ever composed such a Gospel in Hebrew. It is therefore natural to fall back on the narrower and stricter sense of the word translated “Oracles,” and to identify them with these discourses for which “Oracles,” the word used specially of the utterances of the prophets, is the most appropriate that could be chosen.

Then at once daylight seems to dawn upon our inquiry. The condition for which we had stipulated is satisfactorily fulfilled. The Gospel, as we have it, was not composed by St. Matthew ;

but St. Matthew did compose the collection of "Oracles" embodied in our Gospel, and that most distinctive part gave the Gospel its name. The original collection, as an independent work, written on frail papyrus, and exposed as we may well believe to perils both by land and by sea, perished. In that time of harassed movement and distress which environed the destruction of Jerusalem, there is nothing in this to surprise us, even though the scanty Christian chronicles (which owe nearly all they have to tell us to the Jew Josephus) take no notice of the fact. But, before it perished, St. Matthew's little roll had been already copied, and either that copy or another was soon incorporated, with such changes and rearrangement as the transfer necessitated, into our present Gospel.

This is a hypothetical view of the way in which our present Gospel arose. The impression must not be given that it is free from difficulties, or that it has as yet been completely substantiated by proof. It has already been implied that this is not the case, nor would the writer of this venture to claim for it a greater degree of acceptance than it deserves; he only puts it forward as the theory which seems to him most likely, in its main lines, to hold its own.

5. *Doctrinal Character and Purpose of the Gospel.*—The doctrinal character and purpose of the Gospel was very early apprehended, and on this point, too, we have anticipated somewhat in the preceding chapter. If the Gospel was written "for Hebrews, in Hebrew," it naturally followed that it would be written in such a way as would most commend the faith of Christ to the Jews. The great stumbling-block for the unconverted was the claim that the crucified Jesus, from the despised Galilean city Nazareth, was the Messiah; and the great turning-point for those who accepted Christianity was the conviction of His Messiahship. To this then the Evangelist addresses himself, and he seeks to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was really the Messiah of Jewish prophecy, really the legitimate descendant of Abraham and David, heir, in a grander sense than David himself had ever realised, to the Davidic empire. Accordingly he dwells in minute detail not only on the direct fulfilments of prophecy, but also on those many particulars in the Gospel narrative which seemed to reproduce features or incidents connected with the ideal figures of the Old Dispensation.

The wonderful birth and symbolical Name of which Isaiah spoke pre-figured the Birth and Incarnation of the Messiah. He was the Deliverer whom Micah had foretold as to be born in David's city. The wailing which attended the carrying away captive of the "children of Rachel" (*i.e.* inhabitants of Judah

and Bethlehem) by the Chaldeans, typified the wailing which arose upon the massacre which aimed at the life of the infant Messiah. The Chosen People Israel came up out of Egypt, and so must the Messiah—God's Chosen—be brought up out of Egypt. If He took up His abode in the city of Nazareth that, too, had been intimated in one of His symbolical titles. Like the servant of Jehovah His ministry was to be mild and gentle, tender towards the weak and wavering, not loud or demonstrative. Like that servant in another aspect He was to take upon Himself the infirmities and sufferings of humanity. Even the reward paid to the traitor Apostle has its counterpart in that goodly sum, as it is ironically called, which the prophet Zachariah represents the discarded Shepherd of Israel as receiving for his services. None of these are mere chance coincidences. The course of both the Old and New Dispensations is all Divinely ordered. There is a “pre-established harmony” between its parts; the Old points forward to the New, and the New points backward to the Old; nothing happens of itself, but that the word spoken “by the Lord through the prophets” might be fulfilled.

This is the leading idea of St. Matthew's Gospel. It is not merely an apologetic argument addressed to his countrymen: it is rather the fruit of his own devout reflection, and that of others like him, tracing the finger of God in history, and bringing out the deep significance of those events on which the Christian mind delights to dwell. Such an attitude of mind is essentially Jewish. It is true that the Gentile converts adopted the argument from prophecy; but it was not possible that they should have so strong a grasp—like that of the ancient prophets themselves—on the Divine overruling of all events and circumstances in the carrying out of a religious purpose.

There is something equally Jewish in the way in which the Evangelist clings to the old use of terms. Jerusalem is still for him the “Holy City,” the Messiah is “King of the Jews,” or “Son of David”; the God whom people praise is “Israel's God.” It is to the “lost sheep of the House of Israel” that the Apostles are sent. The heathen lie outside the sphere of Christ's mission.* Even “at the regeneration” the “twelve tribes” of Israel are to be judged by the Apostles for the Messiah.

In keeping with this is the stress which is laid upon the fulfilment of the law. St. Paul himself at times put forward this side of the question;† but he is far more often occupied in showing that the law, as a system of precepts, has come to an end. What

* Matthew xv. 23, 26, 27.

† Romans iii. 31; xiii. 9.

with him is the exception, with St. Matthew is the rule, laid down with unequivocal precision.*

And yet the first Evangelist is no narrow-minded or illiberal Christian. He thoroughly accepts the admission of the Gentiles into the Church, and records many sayings which anticipate that admission. He alone describes the visit of the eastern sages; he takes notice of the words of the Baptist demolishing the pretensions of the Jews as the children of Abraham; he mentions the announcement to the faithful centurion that many should come from the east and west and sit down with the patriarchs in the heavenly kingdom; with true historical perspective, as the history advances and the conflict grows deeper, declarations of this kind increase in number,† till the Gospel finally closes with the command to “make disciples of all nations.”

The Evangelist—who thus if he is not St. Matthew himself, most probably retains to the full the spirit of St. Matthew—stands midway between two worlds. His roots are struck deep into the past; he is impressed with the strict continuity of the dispensations on the dividing line between which he was living; and yet he also looks forward into the future with no unfriendly or reluctant gaze; as the prophets had foreseen the coming of Christ, so he recognises that Christ had foreseen the throwing wide of the gates to those whom the Old Law had excluded. He has not discarded Judaism, but with him it is a Judaism of the spirit and not of the letter: Judaism enlarged and Christianized. Jew among Jews, as he is, the Evangelist does not look to the high-placed Pharisees and Sadducees as the true representatives of his people. He turns rather with tender sympathy to the poor and suffering, and he sees in them the true “children of the kingdom.” The “poor in spirit”; the angels of Christ’s little ones who behold the face of His Father; the Gospel hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes; the light yoke and easy burden of Christ, are phrases peculiar to this Gospel. St. John speaks of the “new birth” which the believer must undergo, but St. Matthew has portrayed that new birth with the most delicate and feeling touches. He has caught and saved for us those words of his Master which most truly express the innermost essence of Christianity.

6. *Analysis of the Gospel.*—Bearing in mind the results which have been so far reached, both as to the critical history and doctrinal character and purpose of the Gospel, we are now in a position to attempt an analysis of its contents, such as may at once bring out the leading features of its structure, and also

* Matthew v. 17—19.

† Matthew xxi. 28—32, 42, 43; xxii. 1—10.

help to illustrate the foregoing discussions. We will do this, premising once more that we are not dealing with assured conclusions—no such conclusions as yet exist—but only with such as seem best to commend themselves for provisional acceptance. The three sources of the Gospel appear to be (i.) the *Mark-Gospel* (which we call by this name so as not to prejudge its exact identity with our St. Mark); (ii.) the *Oracles*, originally composed in Hebrew by St. Matthew; (iii.) *Oral Tradition*, specially collected by the Evangelist.

The structure of the Gospel is determined by its leading idea, the presentation of Jesus of Nazareth as the Jewish Messiah. The first two chapters bring together a number of notes in the birth and early life of Jesus, marking Him out as the Messiah of prophecy. In the remainder of the Gospel materials, which the Evangelist found already existing, are worked up in such a way as to throw into relief His Messianic character. From this point of view the climax is reached when the reserve and delicate, indirect self-manifestation of Jesus Himself, with the corresponding prolonged hesitation of His disciples, are at last broken by St. Peter's explicit confession. This height, however, is no sooner reached and the confession confirmed by the glories of the Mount of Transfiguration than the road begins to lead downwards into the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Another aspect of the Messianic office is brought out: the Messiah was not only to reign as King over His people, but He was also to suffer for the sins of mankind.*

The Earthly Career, Character, Mission, and Death of Jesus, the Messiah.

I. Preliminary history: Birth and childhood of the Messiah in fulfilment of prophecy (i., ii.).

Abrahamic and Davidic Lineage—Virgin-Birth—Visit of the Magi—Flight into Egypt—Massacre of Bethlehem—Return to Nazareth.

Except the genealogy, which was probably written, *Oral Tradition*, collected by the evangelist.

II. Inauguration to the Messianic office (iii. 1—iv. 11).

Ministry of John—Baptism—Temptation.

Outline from *Mark-Gospel* with additions from *Oracles*.

* In the Greek text published by Drs. Westcott and Hort, attention is called by the mode of printing to the fact that in this Gospel the formula which marks the commencement of our Lord's public ministry (iv. 17) is exactly repeated at the point where He first begins to prophesy His approaching death (xvi. 21). Both are critical moments which correspond to each other.

III. Galilean Ministry of the Messiah, in a series of scenes or pictures, partly narrative and partly descriptive or typical.

1. First scene. Typical examples of His words and works (iv. 12—ix. 34).

i. Historic introduction, dating from the imprisonment of John (iv. 12—v. 2).

Settlement at Capernaum—Call of Apostles—Circuit of Galilee.

From *Mark-Gospel*.

ii. Typical discourse[s] on the Messianic Kingdom (v. 3—vii. 29).

Character approved by the Messiah in the members of His Kingdom—The Messianic Righteousness—Laws of the Kingdom—Devotion—Duties—Rules of Life.

From the Matthean *Oracles*.

iii. Collection of representative works (viii. 1—ix. 34).

The Leper—The Centurion's Servant—Peter's Wife's Mother—Healing—Followers—Storm at Sea—Two Gadarene Demoniacs Paralytic at Capernaum—Connecting Narrative: Call of Matthew, and Discourse at his House—Ruler's Daughter—Issue of Blood—Two blind Men—Deaf and dumb Demoniacs.

Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*; many think that the healing of the centurion's daughter came from the *Oracles*.

2. Second scene. Mission of the Twelve with its sequel (ix. 35—xii.).

i. Circumstances of the Mission (ix. 35—x.).

Description probably from *Oracles*.

ii. Discourse on the Mission (x. 5—42).

Mission for Israel—Charge to the Missionaries—Their Reward.

Mainly from *Oracles*.

iii. Thread of Narrative continued: Rising opposition; the little flock of Believers (xi., xii.).

Question and character of the Baptist—Chorazin and Bethsaida—The Gospel of babes and toilers—Two Sabbath Anecdotes*—Gentleness of the Messiah†—Casting out devils by Beelzebub—The Messiah's fame.*

Mainly from *Oracles*; sections marked * from *Mark-Gospel*; that marked † a comment by the evangelist.

3. Third scene. Parabolic teaching of the Messiah; continuation of narrative (xiii., xiv.).

- i. Seven parables (xiii. 1—52).
The Sower—Wheat and Tares—Mustard-seed—Leaven—Treasure—Pearl—Drag-net.
Mark-Gospel and Oracles intermixed.
- ii. Thread of narrative continued (xiii. 53—xiv. 36).
Rejection at Nazareth—Death of John—Feeding of five thousand—Walking on the Water.
From *Mark-Gospel*.
4. Fourth scene. Culminating point of opposition and confession (xv. 1—xvi. 20).
 - i. Conflict with the Pharisees on tradition (xv. 1—20).
From *Mark-Gospel*.
 - ii. Withdrawal to the north—Excursion across the Lake (xv. 21—xvi. 12).
The Canaanite Woman—Feeding of four thousand—Further Conflict with Pharisees.
Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*.
 - iii. Second withdrawal (xvi. 13—20).
Peter's Confession; climax to the recognition of the Messiah by His disciples.
Mark-Gospel combined with Oracles.
5. Fifth scene. The confession ratified—Forebodings of the end (xvi. 21—xviii. 35).
 - i. Cæsarea Philippi (xvi. 21—xvii. 20).
First announcement of the Passion—Transfiguration—The epileptic Boy.
From *Mark-Gospel*.
 - ii. Return to Capernaum (xvii. 22—27).
Second announcement of Passion—The Temple-tax.
Mark-Gospel and Special Tradition.
 - iii. Discourses at Capernaum (xviii.).
The Child-like Temper—Offences—Straying—Discipline—The Unmerciful Servant.
Mainly from *Oracles*; introduction from *Mark-Gospel*.
6. Last Journey to Jerusalem (xix., xx.).
Marriage and Divorce—Children Blessed—The Rich Young Man—Labourers in the Vineyard—Third announcement of Passion—Sons of Zebedee—Two Blind Beggars at Jericho.
From *Mark-Gospel*; Parable of Labourers from *Oracles*.
7. The Messiah at Jerusalem; final acts and discourses (xxi.—xxv.).

- i. Entrance into Jerusalem (xxi. 1—17).
The triumphal Procession—Cleansing of the Temple—Babes and Sucklings.
From *Mark-Gospel*.
- ii. Discourses and controversies (xxi. 18—xxii. 45).
The Barren Fig-tree—Authority of Messiah—The two Sons †—Wicked Husbandmen—The Messianic Banquet †—The special Robe †—Plots frustrated.
Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*; sections marked † from *Oracles*.
- iii. Denunciation of the Pharisees (xxiii.).
Another group of sayings from *Oracles*.
- iv. Discourses on the last things (xxiv., xxv.).
Apocalyptic Discourse—Watchful Servants—Virgins—Talents—Last Judgment.
The apocalyptic discourse mainly from *Mark-Gospel*, rest from *Oracles*.

IV. Passion and Resurrection of the Messiah (xxvi.—xxviii.).

1. Two days before the Passover (xxvi. 1—16).
Fourth announcement of Passion—The Rulers' Plot—Anointing for Burial—Treachery of Judas.
Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*.
2. i. The Last Supper (xxvi. 17—35).
The Paschal Meal—Betrayal foretold—Institution of the Eucharist.
ii. On the way to Gethsemane—Dispersion of the Disciples and Peter's denial foretold.
From *Mark-Gospel*.
3. Arrest, trial, and crucifixion; fulfilment of prophecy noted (xxvi. 36—xxvii. 56).
Gethsemane—Arrest—Trial before Caiaphas—Peter's Fall—§End of Judas—Trial before Pilate—§Pilate's Indecision—The Sentence—Mocking—Simon of Cyrene—Crucifixion—§Attendant Wonders—Witnesses of the Crucifixion.
From *Mark-Gospel*, with traces of special tradition in passages marked §.
4. The Burial (xxvii. 57—66).
Joseph's Tomb—§The Pharisees' Guard.
From *Mark-Gospel*; passages marked § from *Special Tradition*.
5. The Resurrection; After Appearance (xxviii.).
The Messiah Risen—§Appearance to the Women—§False Report—§Appearance in Galilee—§Concluding Charge.
From *Mark-Gospel* and *Special Tradition*.

Regarded as a literary composition the structure of the Gospel shows a considerable amount of art of a simple kind, and such as is found in Jewish works of this period. This appears especially in the grouping of events and sayings, and is apt to take a numerical form ; *e.g.* the seven miracles, seven parables, the Beatitudes, woes on the Pharisees, &c. The Evangelist shows a special fondness for arranging his subjects in pairs. Thus we may compare the two Gadarene demoniacs and the two blind men at Jericho, with the single demoniac and single blind Bartimæus of the other Gospels. When we observe that each of these cases goes along with the omission of some previous narrative (Matt. viii. 28 ff. with omission of Mark i. 21—28, and Matt. xx. 29 ff. with the omission of Mark viii. 22—26) the temptation lies near at hand to suppose that some principle of compensation has been at work. This, however, will not account for the two blind men of Matt. ix. 27—31, so far at least as the extant narratives enable us to judge. The mention of the colt as well as the ass in Matt. xxi. 2—7, appears to be due to the influence of Zech. ix. 9.

7. *Date and Early History of the Gospel.*—Not much need be added to what has been already said as to the date of the Gospel. It was complete in its present form, excepting possibly a few very slight expressions, before the final catastrophe of Jerusalem. The great mass of the contents of the Gospel are unaffected by this. The Temple and the altar are spoken of as if they were still standing ; and the coming of the Son of Man is expected immediately after the culmination of the troubles of which the siege of Jerusalem formed a part. But if the whole Gospel was complete before the year 70 that would throw back the composition of the documents worked up in it some way into the decade 60—70. We may well believe the tradition that St. Matthew wrote down his collection of "Oracles" as he was in the act of quitting Jerusalem not later than the year 66. Any alteration introduced after A.D. 70 would seem to have been more of the nature of the freedom exercised by the early copyists than of a formal editorial revision.

The Gospel according to St. Matthew soon attained a wide circulation. For a long time it was the favourite Gospel. We may attribute this favour to the fact that at first especial stress was laid on the "sayings of the Lord," and St. Matthew's Gospel gave peculiar prominence to those "sayings." Something also may be due to the circumstances under which the other Gospels were put into circulation. The Third Gospel, as we shall see, was addressed to an individual, and probably remained for some time in private hands. More or less clear quotations from

it or allusions to it occur by all the so-called Apostolic Fathers except Hermas. It is clearly presupposed by the recently discovered *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. In the Epistle of Barnabas a quotation from it is introduced by the significant "it is written," a phrase which though it implies authority, still does not exactly imply what we should call *canonical* authority, as apocryphal books are quoted in a similar manner. In the works of Justin quotations from St. Matthew hold a prominent place; and Tatian, the disciple of Justin, included it in his *Diatessaron* or *Harmony of the Four Gospels*. The collection of Four Gospels, and no more, was by this time well established, and apocryphal works were rapidly driven out of all competition with them. Among these four the first place was almost universally assigned to St. Matthew. The place of the other Gospels might vary, but that of St. Matthew came first in all the great and authoritative collections. The few exceptions are rather accidents of the MSS. than expressive of any deliberate opinion.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

1. *Early Statements respecting the Gospel.*—Papias has a statement in regard to the work of St. Mark quite as remarkable as that relating to St. Matthew. The passage is as follows:—

“This too the Presbyter said: Mark having become the interpreter of Peter wrote down what he remembered, accurately though not in order, of the things said and done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor had he been in His company, but at a later date, as I said, in the company of Peter, who adapted his teaching to the occasion, and not as though he were putting together a record of the sayings of the Lord: so that Mark did no wrong in setting down some things as he remembered them; for he was careful of one thing, not to omit anything of what he had heard or falsify it in any particular.” (*Euseb. H.E.* iii. 39.)

Here we are expressly told that Papias is drawing his information from some unnamed member of an older generation: he is not criticising the Gospel current under the name of St. Mark, but is only relating an historical fact as to the circumstances of St. Mark’s authorship.

2. *Comparison of this Statement with our present Gospel.*—Again, then, we have to ask: Does this description fit the Gospel as it has come down to us? And again we are met by a problem of very considerable intricacy. What the extract from Papias leads us to expect is a string of anecdotes loosely strung together. We are expressly warned not to suppose that these anecdotes would make up a complete and formal biography, and we are prepared for finding in them a certain want of order. The first of these conditions our Gospel satisfies very well. It is easy to see that it is far from exhaustive. The events of a single day are treated with some degree of fulness, and a number of other more or less salient incidents stand out distinctly enough, but

there are often wide gaps between them, and we have only to turn to the Gospel of St. John to see how extensive and how important is the matter which is omitted. St. Mark says nothing about a Judean ministry; the acts of our Lord in no way turn with him round the Jewish feasts; the only feast which he mentions is the last passover; yet we might be sure that our Lord, as called upon "to fulfil all righteousness," would attend other feasts besides this, precisely as the fourth Gospel makes Him attend them.

3. *Order of the Narratives.*—So far all is satisfactory: the phenomena of the Gospel duly tally with the description given by Papias. But is this equally the case with the second condition—the absence of order? There are many who maintain with much show of reason that it is. The informant of Papias, they say, took as his standard some particular order—such as the order of St. Matthew, or the order of St. Luke, or the order of St. John. Either of the last two might well be taken; for St. Luke claims to write in order,* and St. John maps out his narrative by bold chronological landmarks which are wanting in the other Gospels. Judged by such standards as these the Gospel of St. Mark might seem to have no systematic order. And yet on the other hand, as we shall see presently, it has a very good disposition of its own.

It has a well-marked beginning and a well-marked ending, and the intervening narrative is laid out in such a way as to offer no glaring anachronism or inversion—the successful opening of the public ministry, the growing controversies, the excursions from Capernaum, Peter's confession followed by the first prophecy of death, the Transfiguration, the slow journey to Jerusalem, and so on. But the most remarkable phenomenon in regard to the order is how, whatever it may be in itself, it appears to supply the common outline for the order in the other two Gospels. The other Evangelists appear, roughly speaking, to follow the lead of St. Mark; where one deserts that lead (as St. Matthew does in the earlier part of the narrative and St. Luke in the later) the other keeps closely to it. In the middle for a short space the three diverge somewhat; but on the whole it may be said that while by assuming the order of St. Mark we can explain the order of St. Matthew and St. Luke, we cannot in like manner take either St. Matthew or St. Luke as a key to the two remaining narratives.

4. *Origin of the Gospel.*—There seems here to be some presumption, though not perhaps a decisive presumption, against

* Luke i. 3.

the complete identity of the notes described by Papias with our present Gospel. It would seem as if a further digesting and ordering process must have taken place between the death of St. Peter and the appearance of the Gospel in the form in which we have it. And yet the time allowed for this is very short.

If we follow the tradition, the death of St. Peter would fall at Rome in the year 67 or 68. If we still follow the tradition, St. Mark's notes were not set down in writing until after that event. Of course it is easy to throw over our authorities ; but the tradition which they embody is early and fairly consistent, and it ought not to be abandoned unless we are sure that we have something better to put in its place. But then if we were right in supposing that the first Evangelist had before him the substance at least of St. Mark's Gospel digested and arranged at the time when he brought out the first Gospel as we have it, *i.e.* shortly before the catastrophe of A.D. 70, events must have marched at a rapid rate ; in the meantime the notes of St. Peter's preaching must have been first written, then reduced to connected shape, then carried to Palestine, there combined with St. Matthew's "Oracles," the combined works also edited and published, all within the narrow space of three years.

That this may have been so is far from impossible. But must we not also say that it is far from certain ? Events probably did move quickly. The time had at last come when the importance of these written narratives was fully realised. The Apostolic generation was fast passing away ; crowds of eager Christians from the Jewish Dispersion and from Gentile lands were pressing into the Church and were asking for details of the life of Him whose name they bore. At a distance from the great shock in Palestine the end may not have seemed so near. These precious facts must not be suffered to fall into oblivion. We cannot wonder that, as St. Luke says, many had already begun to set down in writing such particulars as they could collect ; nor can we wonder that a narrative associated from the first with such eminent names should quickly pass from one end of the Christian world to the other and be resorted to as one of the best of existing authorities ; the reader must form his own opinion as to the probability of this. The whole round of questions to which it belongs is still *sub judice*.

5. *Date and Integrity of the Gospel.*—Traces of a date after the taking of Jerusalem in St. Mark's Gospel are extremely few. The outlines of that event still loom dimly and indistinctly all through the great prophetic chapter (Mark xiii.). Only in a single expression ("in those days," Mark xiii. 21, compared

with "immediately" Matt. xxiv. 29) does it seem as if a wider interval were left between the lesser catastrophe and the greater. So slight a change as this might be introduced after the publication of the Gospel, in the way in which other slight variations crept in, but not without betraying themselves in the extant MSS. The most conspicuous example of a passage, which seems to have been absent from the original text of the Gospel though very early appended to it, is supplied by the last twelve verses of the concluding chapter.

The genuineness of these verses is a well-known subject of controversy. They are wanting in two MSS., which are not only the oldest in date but are found in a very great number of instances to have preserved readings which there is strong reason to accept as the true ones. The Church historian Eusebius, who lived in the early part of the fourth century, and besides being the leading scholar of his day had access to the library of Origen, and may be so said to be at the centre of the critical situation, says expressly though in somewhat varying language, that the verses are not current "in some copies," "in the accurate copies," "in almost all the copies of the Gospel." Further, a few MSS. and a group of early and important versions have a different and shorter conclusion which clearly took the place of the longer in widely separated districts.

Surveying the whole of the evidence a delusive appearance of unanimity is seen to be given by the great mass of MSS. which support the verses. The farther we go back in time the slighter does the evidence for them become: from the second century Irenæus, whose work contains many certainly wrong readings, and perhaps Justin, who does not represent a pure Biblical text; from the third century no direct evidence, but only inferential evidence from data, which themselves belong to the fourth. An examination of the verses themselves confirms the conclusion thus suggested. They are found to be not continuous with the previous part of the chapter, but to involve an altogether new beginning. Thus considerations of external and of internal evidence alike converge to make us believe that the Gospel as at first issued was without them. For some reason or other, which we cannot now determine with certainty, the original Gospel ended abruptly; either it was not finished, or the last column or columns of writing were torn off or defaced, and the defect was made good in various ways, one early writer substituting the shorter conclusion, and another the longer as we now have it. The latter, if not taken from a written document, was adopted from the still living oral tradition; and, therefore, though the facts of the narrative have not quite so good a warranty as

those of the rest of the Gospel, they are not devoid of substantial attestation.

6. *The Author.*—The conjecture is not without a certain degree of probability that the young man who was looking on at our Lord's arrest and who fled "naked" (*i.e.* without his outer garment or "himation"), may have been the author of the Gospel. When persons otherwise unknown are mentioned in a narrative it is a fair inference that they stand in some special relation either to the author or to his informants. But we know from Acts xii. 12, that the house of St. Mark was in Jerusalem. His family must have held a good position. The house of his mother was a rendezvous for the Church, and his cousin, Barnabas, possessed landed property in Cyprus. It is even sometimes argued, and, again, not entirely without reason, that the house of Mary was the same in which our Lord held His Last Supper, and in which the disciples gathered after His Ascension.

In any case the young St. Mark stood in close relation to the leaders of the Church. St. Peter describes him as "his son," an expression which is no doubt to be taken in a spiritual sense, and his kinsman, Barnabas, introduced him to St. Paul. The two cousins started with St. Paul on his first missionary journey, and visited together the island of Cyprus, to which they would be attracted by the connection of Barnabas with the island. Here they separated, St. Mark for some unexplained reason returning to Jerusalem; either his courage failed him or else his stricter Jewish views may have received a shock from the liberality of St. Paul in his dealings with the Gentiles. For the time the breach was serious (Acts xv. 37, 38), but at a later date it was made up, and we find St. Mark in the company of St. Paul when he wrote the Epistles to Colossians, Philemon, and Timothy. Later still he is attached to St. Peter.

The ecclesiastical tradition of the second century laid great stress on this association. We have seen how Papias speaks of St. Mark as the "interpreter of St. Peter." Perhaps, as the context seems to suggest, his functions may have been rather those of "secretary." St. Peter appears to have possessed a fair degree of facility in Greek, though he may have needed help when it became necessary to write or discourse in Latin. The numerous Latinisms in the Gospel would lead us to suppose that St. Mark knew something of this language. The "interpretship" becomes a fixed point in the later tradition, and so also is the intimate connection of the second Gospel with St. Peter. Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, refers to it in so many words as the "Memoirs of Peter." All agree that the preaching of the Apostle supplied the materials for the Gospel.

There is only a difference as to whether it was composed during his lifetime or after his death. The latter version has the earlier and better authority.

7. *Character, Style, and Doctrinal Standpoint of the Gospel.*—The influence of St. Peter is discernible on the Gospel. St. Mark himself was not an eye-witness, but he has caught something of the vividness and fulness of detail characteristic of an eye-witness. The paralytic who is healed at Capernaum is carried on his couch by "four" bearers, who "take up the tiles" probably of the corridor of the house where Jesus was, and so let down their patient into His presence. When He heals the withered hand He looks round Him "with anger." The Gadarene demoniac wanders about "among the tombs and among the mountains, crying out and cutting himself with stones." At the cleansing of the Temple not only are the buyers and the sellers turned out, but the further detail is added that no one is allowed to "carry a vessel" through the Temple.

In another way touches of nature appear in the narrative. At a distance from home the memory of St. Peter dwells fondly on particular expressions used by his Master in His own Aramaic speech ("Ephphatha," "Talitha Cumi" or "Cum"). Here, too, we have a verification of the tradition that the writer himself, as well as his informant, came from Palestine. A foreigner would never have thought of preserving such expressions; nor would tradition have preserved them long after it had begun to travel beyond Palestinian soil. On another side the tradition is confirmed when it speaks of Rome as the place where the Gospel was written. The Latin names to which we have referred are one proof of this; a still better is supplied by the incidental mention of "Rufus" (Mark xv. 21), who appears to be the same as the Rufus of Romans xvi. 13; pure Latin names are not common among the early Christians.

Attempts have been made to fix a dogmatic tendency upon the Gospel. All must agree that if there is any such tendency it is marked by great moderation. Hence the Evangelist has been claimed for opposite sides, by some as a representative of Pauline, by others as a representative of Jewish Christianity. He is really no partisan, though he reflects the conscience of the Church at the comparatively later period at which he is writing. The only object of the Gospel appears to be to give an adequate idea of the wondrous and wonder-working life of Christ. It is a filling-out of the programme sketched by St. Peter in Acts x. 37—41: "That saying ye yourselves know which was published throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached, even Jesus of Nazareth, how that God

crowned Him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging Him on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." It is a striking coincidence, and one that should not be forgotten in our estimate both of the speeches in the Acts, and of the traditions relating to the origin of the Gospels, that the report of this speech of St. Peter's agrees so well with the phenomena of the Petrine Gospel.

8. *Analysis of the Gospel.*—In accordance with this description of the Gospel we look in it rather for a simple, straightforward narrative of events than for the development of an abstract idea. No deeply cogitated scheme lies at the bottom of it. The order seems to be in the main and roughly speaking chronological, not from any deliberate aiming at chronology, for the author abandons this without hesitation whenever it suits him, but only because the events naturally fell into a sort of chronological sequence. Sometimes the sections of narrative are grouped according to their subject-matter (*e.g.* the two incidents relating to the Sabbath in ii. 23—iii. 6; the sayings in iv. 21—25, and the two parables which follow); but the grouping is not anything recondite or far-fetched; it is such a grouping as would almost come of itself.

At the same time this easy and natural arrangement is very instructive; it reflects better than any artificial system would do the actual course of events. In particular, the gradual development of belief and the gathering storms of opposition are clearly represented. If a like development may be traced in the other Gospels, it must be remembered that their outline is derived from St. Mark; but in none is the real sequence so little disturbed. It is possible that future inquiries may show that even St. Mark's Gospel is composite in its origin, and that all the traditions which it embodies are not drawn from the same source—St. Mark himself may have had access to other authorities besides St. Peter—but for our present purpose it must be treated as a single whole. It seems, as we have said, to have lain before the other two Evangelists in a form which differed but little from that which it still has in our Bibles.

The Public Life and Work of the Son of Man.

I. Introductory paragraph on the Mission of the Baptist (i. 1—8).

II. The Public Ministry of Jesus.

1. Baptism (Messianic anointing), and Temptation, summarily narrated (i. 9—13).
2. Beginning of Galilean ministry, dating from imprisonment of John (i. 14, 15).
 3. Call of four apostles (i. 16—20).
 4. Opening day of the ministry at Capernaum (i. 21—34).
 5. Circuit of teaching in Galilee; the leper (i. 35—45).
 6. Capernaum:
 - i. Rising opposition (ii. 1—iii. 6).
The Paralytic—Call of Levi—Fasting—Two Sabbath Anecdotes.
 - ii. Miracles and Teaching (iii. 7—iv. 34).
Crowds attracted—Choice of the Twelve—Casting out of Devils—Relatives of Jesus—Parables.
 7. Various movements, with alternations of work and controversy.
 - i. Across the lake; Decapolis; Capernaum; Nazareth; a second circuit (iv. 35—vi. 13).
Storm at Sea—Gadarene Demoniac—Jairus's Daughter—Incredulity of Nazarenes—Mission of Apostles.
 - ii. Herod Antipas (vi. 14—29).
Effect on Herod—Parenthetic mention of Death of John.
 - iii. Across the lake; Gennesaret; longer journey through Tyre and Sidon; Decapolis; further side of the lake (Dalmanutha ?); Bethsaida (vi. 30—viii. 26).
Feeding of Five Thousand—Walking on the Sea—Healings—Controversy with Pharisees from Jerusalem—The Syro-Phoenician Woman—The Deaf and Dumb—Feeding of Four Thousand—A Sign—Leaven of the Pharisees—Blind Man Healed.
 8. Culmination of the Galilean ministry.
 - i. Cæsarea Philippi (viii. 27—ix. 29).
Peter's Confession—First Announcement of the Passion—Taking the Cross—The Transfiguration—The Epileptic Boy.
 - ii. Return to Capernaum (ix. 30—50).
Second Announcement of the Passion—“Who shall be greatest?”—“Not against us, for us”—Offences.
 9. Last journey to Jerusalem.
 - i. On the way through Peræa (x. 1—45).
Bill of Divorce—Little Children—Rich young Man—Third Announcement of the Passion—The Sons of Zebedee.
 - ii. Jericho (x. 46—52).
Blind Bartimæus.
 - iii. Jerusalem and Bethany (xi.—xiii.).

Triumphal Entry—Return to Bethany—Barren Fig-tree—Cleansing of the Temple—Discourses in the Temple: Authority of Jesus—Labourers in the Vineyard—Tribute to Cæsar—Levirate Marriage—The great Commandment—David's Lord—The Scribes—The Widow's Mite—Apocalyptic Discourse.

III. The Passion and Resurrection.

1. Preparations for the end: two days before the Passover (xiv. 1—11).

The Plot—Anointing for Burial—Treachery of Judas.

2. The last Supper (xiv. 12—31).

The Paschal Meal—Betrayal foretold—Institution of the Eucharist—Peter's Denial foretold.

3. Arrest, trial, and crucifixion (xiv. 32—xv. 41).

Gethsemane—The Arrest—Trial before the High Priest—Peter's Fall—Trial before Pilate—The Sentence—Mockery—Simon of Cyrene—The Crucifixion—Witnesses of the Crucifixion.

4. The Burial (xv. 42—47).

5. The Resurrection (xvi. 1—8).

The Women and the Empty Grave.

6. Supplemental summary of Appearances after the Resurrection (xvi. 9—20). (Probably an early addition to the Gospel and perhaps substituted for a lost section.)

9. *Early History of the Gospel*.—It was not unnatural that the shortest of the three Gospels, which contained hardly any matter peculiar to itself, should be overshadowed by the two longer works which circulated along with it. The possessor of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke would find in them nearly all that he would find in St. Mark and more besides. He would make the closest study of the Gospels from which he learnt the most, and he would quote from those with which he was most familiar. Yet there is clear proof that Justin was acquainted with our Gospel. He refers to the name "Boanerges," which it alone mentions, as contained in the "Memoirs of Peter." The constant tradition, to which reference has been made, shows that he means the work of Peter's secretary. Tatian, the disciple of Justin, included the Gospel in his Fourfold Harmony. The mutilated beginning of the Muratorian Fragment (*circa* 180) probably contained a more explicit account of it. It is referred to quite unequivocally by Irenæus, who, as we have seen, is the first to assign to it one of the Evangelic symbols. Irenæus gave it the eagle, later tradition the lion. From Tatian onwards there can be no doubt that its place was fixed as one of the sacred and authoritative four.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

1. *The Preface to the Gospel.*—For St. Luke we miss the valuable but perplexing evidence of Papias. No saying of his in regard to the third Gospel has been handed down to us, and for an express mention of St. Luke as the author we have to wait until Irenæus and the Muratorian Fragment towards the end of the second century. But if until that time the author remains anonymous, in regard to the circumstances under which the Gospel was composed, we possess evidence better and more assuredly authentic even than that of Papias, viz., the evidence of the Evangelist himself. Writing like a man of larger culture than the other two synoptists, he begins his Gospel in the approved literary manner by a brief preface, in which he explains the object and sources of his work and his relation to his predecessors. It is true that this is done in general terms which leave room for much uncertainty in detail, but making all allowance for this the information given is of value.

We learn then that the writer of the Gospel is one degree removed from the events, and belongs to what might be called the second generation of Christians. He had not himself been present at the events, but he had obtained his account of them partly from those who had, partly from others who had been indirectly connected with them, having been occupied with the preaching of Christianity which rested upon them. With the help of these authorities he claims to possess a full and accurate knowledge of the whole history, and to reproduce it in regular order from first to last. But that this order is necessarily chronological would be too much to assert, and there are certainly some incidents (such as the visit to Nazareth, Luke iv. 16—30) where the order of St. Luke is inferior to that of the other two Gospels.

We learn further that others had tried before this to put together written narratives which were, however, not altogether

satisfactory. At least it is clear that the author of the preface thought that he could improve upon them. On the question whether or not these attempted Gospels included the canonical St. Matthew and St. Mark we shall have a word to say presently. The preface is addressed, as it would seem, to a private individual, who from the epithet applied to him would appear to be a person of rank, named Theophilus. Nothing is known of any such person, and the view has not wanted defenders—including, though with some reserve, the late Bishop of Durham in his article on the Acts in the second edition of the *Dictionary of the Bible*—that the name Theophilus represents a fictitious personality, and is intended to stand for the devout Christian in general, much as in the late Bishop Wordsworth's *Theophilus Anglicanus*. It is, however, an objection to this view that the epithet of which we have just spoken is distinctly appropriated to official personages, and therefore would hardly be in place as applied to the average Christian.

It seems, therefore, better to suppose that some influential person otherwise unknown to history is meant. He was already a Christian, and already had had the outlines of the narrative set before him in that course of oral instruction which was undergone by the candidates for baptism. His curiosity was, however, not yet satisfied, and in this he is typical of the large class for whom our Gospels were written. The teaching of the first generation of Christians had been in the main doctrinal, turning upon a few salient points, such as the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. But there was a growing desire, especially among the Gentile converts, to know more of the details of the life of the Messiah; and this desire both the Gospel before us and the attempts which it superseded were intended to meet.

2. *The Author of the Gospel.*—Who was the author of this anonymous work? Ecclesiastical tradition has seen in him consistently St. Luke, the beloved physician, one of the companions of St. Paul. The earliest date at which this tradition appears in writing was, as we have said, the latter years of the second century, when expression is given to it by Irenæus and the Fragment on the Canon. From that time onwards it is abundantly attested; nor is the delay of a hundred years anything abnormal. Up to the time of Irenæus the stream of Christian literature outside the New Testament is so scanty that many facts, the memory of which must have been continuously preserved, find their first mention at that period. The tradition of St. Luke's authorship is also supported by the absence of any divergent tradition, nor was the name prominent enough to offer a strong attraction to those who, at the end of the second century, were eager to find

apostolic authority for their own opinions, and for the documents which gave countenance to them.

On all these grounds the tradition comes to us with a strong presumption in its favour, and that presumption is heightened by the argument based on the certain identity of the author of the third Gospel with the author of the Acts. We must not go into this question here. Suffice it to say that it is still by far the most probable view that the Book of Acts was really written by a companion of St. Paul, who was included in the group spoken of as “we” in Acts xvi. 10, and many places afterwards. There are only three possibilities: either the writer was really one of St. Paul’s companions; or a diary written by one of St. Paul’s companions has been incorporated into the book; or some other person has sought to pass for a companion of St. Paul’s, and has deliberately given his narrative the colour of proceeding from such a companion. All these views have been held, but in England the balance of opinion still is, and is likely to be, decidedly in favour of the first. And if it is once agreed that the anonymous writer was one who had accompanied St. Paul on his journeys, then it has been elaborately proved that no other name satisfies the conditions so well as St. Luke’s, so much so that even those who do not ascribe the whole book to him, still for the most part either see in him the author of the incorporated diary, or else believe that it was sought to suggest his authorship. Taking the question as a whole the present writer is of opinion that, except for the Pauline Epistles, as strong a case can be made out for the traditional authorship of the third Gospel and the Acts as for that of any other book of the New Testament.

As to the personality of St. Luke, what we really know of him is derived from the Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul. He was a physician by profession, and is first found in the company of St. Paul when he decided to cross over from Asia Minor to Europe. Together they sailed from Troas, and together they arrived at Neapolis and Philippi. Here, if we may argue from the dropping of the first person in the narrative, St. Luke was left, perhaps through some private connection with the place, though the inference drawn by M. Renan that he was a native of Philippi has not enough to bear it out. At Philippi he would seem to have stayed, or at least to have made it his headquarters, throughout the interval, which, on a probable chronology, would extend from the year 54 to 58, for it can hardly be a chance coincidence that the first person plural is resumed (Acts xx. 5) in the narrative of the Acts from St. Paul’s arrival at the same point on his return journey from Greece, when he was on his way to attend the feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem.

From this time onwards St. Luke remains with him, so far as we can gather, to the end of the Apostle's life. The Acts represent them as travelling together all the way, first to Cæsarea and then to Rome. St. Luke is still there at the writing of the Epistles to Colossians and Philemon, and he is the Apostle's sole stay at the time when he wrote his last Epistle (2 Tim. iv. 11). Now he disappears and the rest is conjecture. If we are to believe Eusebius, St. Luke was a native of Antioch. This may, however, have arisen from a confusion with Lucius of Cyrene, mentioned in Acts xiii. 1, just as Origen appears to identify him with the Lucius of Rom. xvi. 21. But the name Luke, though equivalent to Lucanus, is not properly the same name as Lucius. The notion that Lucanus is the same name as Silvanus is a mere fancy, and the tradition that St. Luke was a painter as well as a physician is quite late and of no value. Neither can he have been, as Epiphanius would give us to understand, one of the Seventy. The Seventy were both "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," from whom the Evangelist expressly distinguishes himself.

3. *Sources of the Gospel.*—If the author of the third Gospel was really St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul, then his historical position is fixed at once. Christian antiquity, from Tertullian onwards, always regarded this Gospel as representing the Apostle of the Gentiles. Eusebius even mentions, as having some currency in his day, the foolish idea that when St. Paul speaks of "my Gospel" (as in Romans ii. 16), he means the Gospel of St. Luke. It would be clear from this that St. Luke would obtain much of his information—not exactly from St. Paul himself, for St. Paul had to depend upon others for the facts of the Gospel history (1 Cor. xv. 3)—but at least in the *entourage* of St. Paul. The influence of St. Paul is seen rather in the general tone and standpoint of the Gospel than in the narrative of particular facts.

The one conspicuous instance of a parallelism of the latter kind turns upon a very doubtful reading. A marked resemblance exists in the ordinary texts between the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper as given by St. Luke, and that in 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25; but the best critics are of opinion that the greater part of the verses Luke xxii. 19, 20—all that follows the words, "This is my body" down to "which is shed for you"—has been introduced into the text of St. Luke from the Epistle. The passage is wanting in a group of MSS., mainly Latin or Græco-Latin, which represent an extremely ancient text; and the common reading, though found in the large mass of authorities, raises considerable difficulties by dividing the account of the

institution of the cup, or making it repeated twice over. That the narrative should have been filled out at a very early date by borrowing from the language of St. Paul is in accordance with other phenomena of the text, and is a hypothesis by no means improbable. This would reduce the points of special contact with St. Paul to the mention of the appearance of the risen Lord to St. Peter (Luke xxiv. 34, compared with 1 Cor. xv. 5), which is without doubt something more than a chance coincidence. Other supposed points of contact cannot be pressed.

When St. Luke's Gospel comes to be examined in detail it is found possible to map out its contents according to the probable sources from which they were derived. Especially is this the case if we may accept as probable the theory as to the origin and composition of the Synoptic Gospels which has been put forward in the previous chapters. In part the composition of St. Luke would be parallel to that of St. Matthew. If we lop off from both the first two and the latter half of the last chapters, then what remains will be found to have the same fundamental structure. The outline of the narrative appears to be supplied by a document closely resembling, if not identical with, our present St. Mark. In this are inserted masses of discourse which we may believe to have been taken from the original "Oracles" of St. Matthew. If this were the case we should then know two at least of the "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" to whom St. Luke expresses his obligations; they would not be excluded by the fact that their testimony is spoken of as "delivered," a word which in the Greek is most commonly used of oral tradition.

The tradition to which St. Luke refers was partly written and partly oral, and the Gospel of St. Mark and Oracles of St. Matthew did not make up the whole of it. Two other sources at least are discernible in the narrative as it has come down to us. The first two chapters (deducting the Preface) stand by themselves. They are full of Hebraising expressions which give them a stamp of their own; such would be "walking in the commandments and ordinances," "stricken in years," "great in the sight of the Lord," "filled with the Holy Ghost," "spirit and power of Elias," "take away my reproach," "hast found favour with God," &c. These two chapters then we may mark off as having a special source of their own, which was probably in writing. Most of the occasions of which we hear of St. Luke have their scene at a distance from Palestine; but at one time he would seem to have been for fully two years within the limits of the Roman province which bore that name. He accompanied St. Paul on his last recorded journey to Jerusalem, stayed with him for some time at the house of Philip the "Evangelist" at

Cæsarea, went up with him to Jerusalem, and, as we infer, remained not far away from his person during the time of his later confinement at Cæsarea.

Though Philip was not an "Evangelist" precisely in the sense in which we now give the name to St. Luke, but rather as an itinerant preacher or missionary than the author of a written Gospel, still he too would have to make inquiries for facts as to the life of the Lord, and in his company it is very possible that St. Luke may have met others who would be able to give him information more or less at first hand. We are not without indications as to one of the quarters from which such information came. St. Luke displays a special knowledge of matters relating to the court of the Herods. He mentions by name a woman whom none of the other Evangelists mention: "Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward:"* and in like manner in the Acts he speaks of Manaen "foster-brother of Herod." Here we have a glimpse of a circle from which St. Luke probably got his account of the quarrel and reconciliation between Pilate and Herod, as well as of the circumstances of the death of Herod Agrippa I., and of facts relating to Agrippa II.†

One slight indication would perhaps suggest that we owe to the same source the narrative of the walk to Emmaus; the name Cleopas (short for Cleopatros) is just such as would be affected in the surroundings of the Herodian court. Herod the Great at one time greatly curried favour with Antony and Cleopatra, and such a name might well descend among the dependants of his house. The name (unlike Cleopas, which may = Alphæus) was not one which would be borne by a strict Jew. This Herodian source may very possibly have been oral. St. Luke has besides this a quantity of peculiar matter in regard to which it is difficult to say how far it came from a single source, and how far from a number of sources. To some extent the peculiar portions are similar in subject. Thus we have a number of incidents relating to Samaritans.‡ We have some typical cases of the dealings of Christ with publicans and sinners;§ and also examples of His teaching as to the admission of the outcast and penitent.|| On the other hand, the opposition of riches and poverty is strongly brought out;¶ and occasionally narratives are inserted with a

* Luke viii. 3; compare Acts xiii. 1.

† Luke xxiii. 7—12; Acts xii. 20—23; xxv. 13, &c.

‡ Luke ix. 51—56; x. 30—37; xvii. 11—18.

§ Luke vii. 36—50; xix. 1—10.

|| Luke xv. 1—7; 8—10, 11—32; xviii. 9—14.

¶ Luke i. 52, 53; vi. 20, 21; xvi. 19—31.

strongly Jewish cast, like those of the “daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound” with a spirit of infirmity.*

4. *Character, Style, and Analysis of the Contents of the Gospel.*—Owing to this diversity of origin of its different parts, the Gospel presents a many-coloured appearance, now seeming to favour one set of views and now another. Rich and profound teaching, such as that which the Evangelist records, presented a number of different sides, of which different minds would take hold. The course of events and the evolution of history would throw light upon sayings which had at first lain dormant and attracted little attention. The first collectors of the evangelical traditions would vary much in their own standpoint and width of outlook. Some would contemplate the past, others the future; some would be intent on their own immediate surroundings, others would lift up their eyes to a more distant horizon; some would think rather of the Jews and of Palestine, others of the growing Gentile Church and of the wider destinies of the world. These differences were impressed on the materials of which St. Luke made use, and he has faithfully reproduced them. He is like the householder in the parable who brings out of his treasures “things new and old.” He has his own leanings, and those leanings appear in the Gospel. The predominant tone is such as we should expect in the companion and disciple of St. Paul. Most characteristic is that chapter (xv.) which contains the parables of the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, the lost or prodigal son. It is not the outcasts of Palestine alone who are in view, but those dispersed abroad throughout the world. These delicate and tender pictures are no inventions. They lay in a side room apart from the public gallery of the first age, and the preceding evangelists had passed them by. St. Luke brought them out never again to be lost sight of. Yet he, too, sets by their side pieces conceived in another spirit, touches of particularism which had escaped his predecessors. He is a true historian who collects what he can wherever he finds it.

St. Luke has more literary ambition than his fellows. He spreads his canvas more elaborately and more after the manner of the secular artists. He alone endeavours to connect the Gospel narrative with the annals of the province of Syria and the Roman empire. It is a mistake to say that he had read Josephus; but Josephus is not the only authority who dealt with the Roman government of Judea and its border territories. At Antioch, at Cæsarea, at Rome, he would have abundant opportunities of becoming acquainted with the *fasti* of the province or

* Luke xiii. 11—17.

provinces of which it fell to him to treat. In this way he has come to speak of the census of Quirinius, the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, Iysanias of Abilene, and the like. All his data may not be exactly right; he had not the facilities of one who enjoyed the favour of emperors like Josephus, or who belonged to the foremost Roman aristocracy like Tacitus; but he made, at least, a conscientious attempt, and the historical details of the Acts show that he attained a high standard of success.

These are some of the characteristics of the Gospel, of which we may now proceed to give a brief analysis, bearing, as far as we can, those characteristics in mind.

History of the Life on Earth of the Saviour of the World.

- I. Preface, explaining the sources and object of the Gospel (i. 1—4).
- II. Birth and early years of the Saviour and His Forerunner (i. 5—ii. 52).

Announcement of the Birth of John and of Jesus—Birth of John—Birth of Jesus at the first Census of Quirinius—His Circumcision and Presentation in the Temple—Visit to the Temple at the age of twelve years.

From peculiar source or sources.

- III. Judean Ministry of the Saviour.

Following for the most part the outline of St. Mark. Note that St. Luke uses Judean in a wide sense so as to include Galilee.

1. The Mission of the Baptist (iii. 1—20).

The fifteenth year of Tiberius—Preaching of John—His Prophecy of Christ—Notice of his Death.

From *Mark-Gospel*, with enlargement perhaps from *Oracles*.

2. Inauguration of the Ministry of Jesus (iii. 21—iv. 13).
Baptism of Jesus—Genealogy—Temptation.

Mark-Gospel, special source, and *Oracles*.

3. Jesus in Galilee (iv. 14—44).

Preaching in Galilee—Discourse at Nazareth and Incredulity of Nazarenes (antedated)—Settlement at Capernaum—A Day's Ministry—Circuit.

Mark-Gospel, with special source for Discourse.

4. Narrative continued (v. 1—vi. 15).

Call of four Apostles—the Leper—The Paralytic—Call of Levi—Fasting—Two Sabbath Anecdotes.

Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*, first subject expanded from special source.

5. The so-called Lesser Interpolation. Discourses, Miracles of Healing, and other incidents not all connected with Galilee (vi. 12—viii. 3).

*Choice of the Twelve—†Sermon on the Mount (“level place” St. Luke)—†Centurion’s Servant—§ Widow’s Son at Nain—†Question and Character of John—§ Jesus’ feet anointed—§ The Ministering Women.

Passage marked with * from *Mark-Gospel*, those marked † probably from *Oracles*, those marked § from sources peculiar to St. Luke.

6. Narrative continued (viii. 4—56).

Parable of the Sower—Relations of Jesus—Storm at Sea—Gadarene Demoniac.

From *Mark-Gospel*, perhaps with slight influence from *Oracles* in earlier portion.

7. Height of the Galilean Ministry (ix. 1—50).

Mission of the Twelve—Effect on Herod—Feeding of Five Thousand—Peter’s Confession—First Announcement of Passion—Taking the Cross—Transfiguration—The Epileptic Boy—Second Announcement of Passion—“Who shall be greatest?”—“Not against us, for us.”

Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*.

IV. The Greater Interpolation, consisting largely of matter peculiar to St. Luke (ix. 51—xviii. 14).

This is sometimes called the “Peræan Section” or “Samaritan Section” because of ix. 51—56; x. 30—37; xvii. 11—19.

1. First Section (ix. 51—xiii. 35).

i. § The Samaritan Village—†Followers—§ The Seventy—† Chorazin and Bethsaida—§ † Return of Seventy—* The Greatest Commandment—§ The Good Samaritan—§ Mary and Martha.

ii. † § Prayer—* † Casting out Devils by Beelzebub—§ True Blessedness—Sign of Jonah—† Lamp of the Body—† The Pharisees denounced—† Boldness in Confession—§ The Inheritance—§ The Rich Fool—† Cares—† Treasures—† Watchful Servants—† “Not peace but division.”

iii. § The Slaughtered Galileans—§ Parable of Fig-tree—§ Spinal Curvature healed—* Mustard Seed—† Leaven—† “Who are the saved?”—Departure from Galilee: § Message to Antipas—† Jerusalem.

2. Second Section (xiv. 1—xvii. 10.)

i. § Dropsy Healed—§ Banquets—† The Messianic Banquet—

†§ Counting the Cost—†The Lost Sheep—§ The Lost Drachma—§ The Lost Son.

ii. § The Clever Steward—†Short Sayings—§ Rich Man and Lazarus—*Offences—*Faith—§ Servants' duties.

iii. § The Samaritan Leper—§†Coming of the Kingdom—§ The Unrighteous Judge—§ Pharisee and Publican.

Passages marked * mainly from *Mark-Gospel*, those marked † mainly from *Oracles*, those marked § peculiar; combined signs denote combination of sources.

V. Journey to Jerusalem completed; Jesus in Jerusalem and at the Mount of Olives (xviii. 15—xxi. 22).

i. Little Children—The Rich Young Man—Third Announcement of the Passion—Blind Man at Jericho—§Zacchæus—§ The Minæ—Triumphal entry—Lament over Jerusalem—Cleansing of the Temple.

ii. Authority of Jesus—Wicked Husbandmen—Tribute to Cæsar—Levirate Marriage—David's Son and Lord—The Scribes—The Widow's Mite—Apocalyptic Discourse.

Mainly from *Mark-Gospel*; passages marked § peculiar.

VI. Passion and Resurrection of the Saviour (xxii. 1—xxiv. 12).

1. Two days before Passover (xxii. 1—6).
Treachery of Judas.

2. The Last Supper (xxii. 7—38).
The Paschal Meal—Institution of the Eucharist—Betrayal prophesied—“Who shall be greatest?”—Prophecy of Peter's Denial—§A Turning-point.

3. Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion (xxii. 39—xxiii. 49).
Gethsemane : § The Agony—Arrest—Peter's Denial—Trial of Jesus before the Presbytery—Trial before Pilate—§ Jesus sent to Herod—Sentence—Simon of Cyrene—§ Daughters of Jerusalem—Crucifixion: § The two Criminals—Witnesses of the Crucifixion.

4. The Burial (xxiii. 50—56).

5. The Resurrection: After-Appearances (xxiv.).
Women at the Empty Grave—§ Walk to Emmaus—§ Appearance to Simon—§ Appearance to the Eleven—§ (The Ascension?).

Main outline from *Mark-Gospel*; passages marked § peculiar.

5. *Date and Early History of the Gospel*.—We have already seen that the Gospel was probably composed about the year 80 A.D., during the period which St. Luke himself calls “the times of the Gentiles” (xxi. 24), *i.e.* the period ushered in by the fall of Jerusalem, during which the Gentiles were to be the appointed ministers of Divine vengeance. We have also seen

that the Gospel was written, in the first instance, for a private person named Theophilus. That this was its original destination is confirmed by the apparent significance of some remarkable phenomena in the text. The Gospel appears at a very early date to have undergone certain additions, which have left traces of themselves in the MSS. The additions in question would seem from the authorities which support them to have been made at two distinct times.

On one occasion there were only added the two verses which describe the agony of the Saviour as "drops of blood" in the garden of Gethsemane (xxii. 43—44), and those most important and precious words—which are certainly authentic as a statement of fact, whatever their textual character—the prayer for forgiveness of those who caused His death (xxiii. 34).* On the other occasion a longer string of additions was made. Foremost among them would be in all probability the insertion of words borrowed from 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, expanding the account of the institution of the Eucharist (xxii. 19, 20), and the words describing the Ascension ("and He was carried up into heaven," xxiv. 51), with several other less important phrases in Chapter xxiv.

Both these sets of additions were introduced at such an early date that some (including Bishop Lightfoot) have supposed that St. Luke himself actually issued two editions of his Gospel. It appears, however, to satisfy the conditions rather better, if we suppose that they were introduced after they had left the hands of the evangelist, but so soon after that the most natural person to think of in connection with them is, if not the writer of the Gospel, yet the person to whom the Gospel was written, the "most excellent Theophilus." Additions like these are just such as would be made by the private possessor of a written narrative, who, after it was received, fell in with some additional incidents which came to him with good authentication, or who thought himself justified in filling out a point here and there by a process of legitimate inference. Such an one would think that he was only doing what he would with his own; that he himself was the gainer; and that no harm could possibly come from his zeal. And we at this distance of time, may in most cases heartily endorse his action, and express our gratitude to him for preserving words which we should indeed not willingly "let die."

If we may carry our speculations a step farther we should say, putting together what we know of the origin of the particular

* This addition perhaps belongs rather to the next class.

group of MSS. in which the second class of additions is absent, with the official title "most excellent," and the tradition connecting St. Luke with Antioch, that Antioch itself was the most probable residence of Theophilus, and that he is likely to have been in some way or other attached to the staff of the "legatus" of Syria. These are conjectures, but to the student of the text they will, it is thought, possess rather more foundation than appears upon the face of them.

After the death of Theophilus the process of grafting on small additions to the Gospel, partly by way of inference and comparison with the other Gospels which were now circulating in the neighbourhood of it, but partly also drawn from the not yet exhausted strain of oral tradition, still continued. One conspicuous instance of it we may mention. Numerous copies of the Gospel had been made and dispersed abroad—the parent lines of our present text had been already laid—when in a single copy there was inserted after vi. 4, the following anecdote which could hardly have been derived from any other source than living tradition: "On the same day, seeing one at work on the Sabbath, He said to him, 'O man, if thou knowest what thou doest thou art blessed, but if thou knowest not thou art accursed and a transgressor of the law.'" To illustrate which we may compare St. Paul in Romans xiv. 23, 25: "Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because (he eateth) not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin." In other words, an act done from sincere and full conviction may be justified, when, if done from any lesser motive, it would be condemned. The copy in which the insertion first appeared was probably still made somewhere in the region of Antioch, but more in a corner than those of which we have been speaking. It may be seen to this day in the famous MS. presented by Beza to the University of Cambridge.

Unequivocal proofs of an extensive use of St. Luke's Gospel in quarters far remote from that to which it was originally addressed meet us as we approach the middle of the second century. The heretic writer Marcion, from the province of Pontus, which stretches along the shores of the Black Sea on the north of Asia Minor, accepted only a single Gospel, which he cut down to somewhat reduced dimensions by removing everything which seemed to conflict with his own peculiar doctrines. That Gospel was our present St. Luke. At one time it was thought that Marcion's shorter Gospel might be the original, and our own Gospel an expansion, but this view is now generally given up. Not only did Marcion use our present Gospel, but there is evi-

dence to show that he used it in a text which already, even at that early date, bore traces of corruption. The Gospel which he used about the year 140 cannot have been a new production, but must have been current for a considerable time and have passed through a number of hands.

A little later than Marcion (*circa* 150) Justin Martyr also certainly used our present Gospel, and in his time it already contained the verses describing the Bloody Sweat which we have some reason to think were not in the original copy. It was one of the four works which went to make up the "Diatessaron" of Tatian, Justin's disciple (160—170). When we come to the Muratorian Fragment we have an account of the origin of the Gospel, which seems to be made up from Scriptural data but is proof of the estimation in which the Gospel was held. When the corrupt text is emended it appears to run thus: "The third book of the Gospel, 'according to Luke,' Luke the physician, composed after the Ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him with him as the companion of his journeying, in his own name from hearsay (he had not himself seen the Lord in the flesh), and as best he could, beginning with the birth of John." With Tatian, the Fragmentist, and Irenæus the Gospel is already what we should call "canonical," and it does not go back from this position.

THE WRITINGS ASCRIBED TO ST. JOHN.

1. *Tradition as to Authorship.*—The traditional belief of the Christian Church, dating from the earliest times, ascribes the authorship of five of the New Testament books to the Apostle John. Of these five, the Gospel and the First Epistle are classed by Eusebius ("Ecc. Hist." iii. 25) as undisputed books, whose authority was recognised by all the churches throughout the world. We shall presently discuss a further statement of Eusebius, viz., that John wrote his Gospel with a knowledge of what the other three Evangelists had written, and with the intention of supplementing their narratives. A tradition to this effect had been recorded by Clement of Alexandria about the end of the second century.

The external testimony to the Second and Third Epistles is less strong. The very early citations of them are scanty, and yet perhaps as numerous as can reasonably be expected in the case of documents so short and presenting so little matter for quotation. It is likely that, being private letters addressed to individuals, they were for some little time not included in the public reading of the Church. And the letters being anonymous there was room for individual speculation as to who the writer might be who describes himself as "the Elder." But we shall presently see good reason for acquiescing in the prevalent opinion, all dissent from which soon died out, that the writer was the same as the author of the Gospel and of the First Epistle.

The four books just enumerated are all anonymous, and our knowledge of their authorship rests on independent tradition; but the fifth book, that of the Revelation, itself gives its author's name as John; and so early as the middle of the second century the book is cited by Justin Martyr as the work of John the Apostle. In respect of antiquity of attestation few New Testament books stand more favourably; but after a time the authority of the book came to be disputed, less, however, because of any

good grounds for questioning the earlier tradition as to its authorship than because the contents of the book were not acceptable to many Christian readers. But by the end of the fourth century all opposition had died out, and the book has been for centuries universally accepted in the Christian Church as the record of a divine revelation made to one of the twelve apostles. In modern times all the traditional opinions concerning the authorship of the New Testament books have been subjected to free examination by critics who own no high respect for Church authority. Under this examination the Apocalypse has fared better than some other books of the Church canon, this book being recognised as St. John's by many critics who refuse the like acknowledgment in the case of the four other books traditionally ascribed to the same author.

In the present introduction we have thought it advisable to confine ourselves to topics on which the mere English reader is competent to pass judgment. We therefore do not attempt to produce in full the testimony of early Christian Fathers, in order to appreciate which some learned discussion would be necessary as to the meaning of the passages cited, and as to the credit due to the writers. We shall content ourselves with testing by internal evidence the various points of the traditional belief. It is necessary to begin by examining whether the five books with which we have to deal have been rightly ascribed to the same author, because on the determination of this question depends whether inferences drawn from one of these books can properly be combined with those drawn from another.

2. *Common Authorship of Gospel and First Epistle*.—If it is possible to prove anything by internal evidence the identity of authorship of these two works may be regarded as certain. The similarity of style and phraseology, though no doubt more striking in the original, is obvious enough in a translation. No style presents more marked peculiarities than that of the Fourth Gospel. The most careless reader is conscious of the difference when he passes on to this Gospel from the study of the preceding three, and equally so when he passes on from this Gospel to the Epistles of St. Paul or St. James or St. Peter. If he proceeds to examine wherein the peculiarity consists, he finds among other things that in the Fourth Gospel each sentence usually stands by itself, and that while there is continuity of thought there is little in form of expression. The sentences are linked together only as the propositions in Euclid are linked together, where, though one proposition prepares the way for those that come after, yet it is complete in itself, and there is nothing in its enunciation to indicate that others are to follow.

Thus St. John's style may be compared to that of the old uncial MSS., in which each letter is a capital not joined on to any other. The Evangelist does not write like an advocate bound to prove his case by argument, but he assumes the tone of a teacher whose bare word is enough to satisfy his hearers. He makes a statement; then, when his hearers have had time to ponder on it, he goes on to make another, suggested by something he has said, in which some idea that he has expressed is enlarged or supplemented. Very frequently the second sentence follows the former without any connecting particle, or with at most the conjunction "and."

(i.) We are at once struck with this characteristic of style on reading the opening verses of the Gospel, which consist of a number of short sentences connected by no particle but "and." The same characteristic prevails all through the First Epistle. It will be a sufficient example to take the last three verses of the first chapter and the opening verses of the second, where we have some sentences standing independent, others connected only with "and": "*And* if any man sin"; "*And* he is the propitiation"; "*And* hereby we do know." One of the "ands" in the first chapter (verse 5) deserves notice, because the Authorised Version has not preserved this peculiarity of style. It renders "*This then is the message,*" but the Revised Version has literally "*and this is the message,*" the form of expression being strikingly parallel to that at the beginning of the Gospel (i. 19), "*And this is the witness of John.*" See also "*and this is his commandment*" (1 John iii. 23); "*and this is the witness*" (1 John v. 11.).

(ii.) But though the sentences in the Gospel are slightly connected by particles, they are united in a more intimate way, succeeding sentences being constantly pervaded by the same thought, and often the same word running on through several successive verses. Thus observe how the word "witness" runs through the verses (John v. 31—39). The Epistle is full of instances of the same characteristic. The same word "witness" runs through 1 John v. 6—11, where, though in the Authorised Version the translators sometimes substitute the word "record," both represent the same word in the original. In like manner observe how the word "love" runs through the verses v. 7—12.

(iii.) Again, it is a habit of the Evangelist to express an idea both positively and negatively. "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made" (i. 3); "he confessed and denied not" (i. 20); "shall not perish but have everlasting life" (iii. 15, 16), &c. Instances of the same habit are numerous in the Epistle. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at

all" (i. 5); "is truth and is no lie" (iii. 27), &c. In connection with the second example it may be added that both in Gospel and Epistle we find the statement that a proposition is true, supplemented by the statement that to assert the opposite would be to tell a lie (John viii. 55; 1 John i. 6, 8; ii. 4, 22; iv. 20). Compare also Rev. ii. 2; iii. 9.

(iv.) The words and phrases which are favourites with the Evangelist are also prominent in the Epistle. We have already had some instances of this. For example, the word "witness," already noticed, may be said to be one of those favourite words. It is comparatively rare in the Synoptic Gospels, but either the noun or the corresponding verb occurs some fifty times in the Fourth Gospel. It is needless to say what a prominent place the word "love" holds, both in Gospel and Epistle; and we cannot be wrong in finding in the "commandment" of love, 1 John iv. 21, a reference to the "new commandment," John xiii. 34, for the "new commandment" is expressly mentioned, 1 John ii. 8. So likewise the contrast between those who "abide in the light" and those who "walk in darkness," 1 John i. 6, 7; ii. 9, 11, has not only its counterpart in the Gospel, iii. 19; viii. 12; xi. 9; xii. 46, but the very same words are found both in Gospel and Epistle, "He that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John viii. 35; 1 John ii. 11).

The same contrast is also in both books spoken of as one between "death" and "life"; and here too, in identical words, "have passed from death unto life" (John v. 24; 1 John iii. 14). "Eternal life" is the constantly recurring theme in both books, and of this life not only is our Lord described in the Gospel as the source, but He is given the title "the Life" (John i. 3; xi. 25; xiv. 6). At the very beginning of the Epistle we have (i. 2) "the Life was manifested"; this word "manifested" being also a favourite word with the Evangelist, and applied by him to our Lord's appearance in the world (i. 31); and the Epistle closes with "this is the eternal Life" (v. 20); see also v. 11, 12. Other titles given to our Lord in both Gospel and Epistle are "Only begotten" (John i. 14; 1 John iv. 9), and "Saviour of the world" (John iv. 42; 1 John iv. 14).

The latter coincidence deserves the more attention because the title indicates a total change from the Messianic conception when Jews had looked for a successor to David who should restore the independence of their people and raise them to sovereignty. They now believe in one who was the "propitiation, not for their sins only, but for the sins of the whole world." It would be too long to go through several other coincidences between the two books in connection with this word "world." One may be

mentioned, the phrase to "overcome the world" (John xvi. 33; 1 John v. 4, 5).

It would be tedious to go through all the details of proof, and we but add by way of specimen a few more coincidences, in some of which identical expressions are to be found, John xvi. 20, 1 John i. 4; John xvii. 3, 1 John v. 24; John v. 38, 1 John ii. 14; John viii. 47, 1 John iv. 6; John i. 18, 1 John iv. 12; John xiv. 16, 1 John ii. 1; John xix. 34, 1 John v. 6. Suffice it to say that the proofs of common authorship are so abundant that a good critic could hardly fail to recognise the books as works of the same author, even if they had come to him separately, and if he were ignorant of the fact that, from the earliest times the books were known down to the present century, the belief in their common authorship had universally prevailed.

3. *The Two Minor Epistles*.—It has been already stated that while the early Church was unanimous in ascribing the Gospel and the First Epistle to the same author, the other two Epistles had in early times so much more limited circulation that there was then some difference of opinion as to whether "the Elder" in whose name they are written was or was not the Apostle. But if the weakness of external testimony should cause us any hesitation in accepting the belief in unity of authorship, which after a time came to prevail universally in the Church, our doubts are entirely removed by internal evidence. Not only does the Second Epistle bear a general resemblance to the First, both as to ideas and as to form of expression, but it has been pointed out that of the thirteen verses of which the shorter Epistle consists eight have close counterparts in the First.

One phrase which has been already noticed as common to the Gospel and the First Epistle, "that your joy may be full," occurs in the Second Epistle also (verse 12). Other indications of common authorship will be found on comparing the phrase "both the Father and the Son" (verse 9) with 1 John ii. 23, v. 12; and what is said about the commandment of love 2 John 5—7 with 1 John iii. 22, 23. In these verses of 2 John there is an even more striking coincidence with 1 John ii. 7, in the successive mention of "that which ye had from the beginning," "that which ye heard from the beginning." The Third Epistle so resembles the Second, both in its commencement and its conclusion, that no one has dreamed of separating the authorship of these two.

4. *The Book of the Revelation*.—It is not intended in this article to discuss the authorship of the Book of Revelation. The plan we have adopted of addressing ourselves mainly to the English reader precludes us from entering into an examination of the

character of the Greek of this book, on the unlikeness of which to the Greek of the Gospel has been founded one of the principal arguments for the diversity of authorship of the two books. But if we take into account how very different are the subjects of the two books, the English reader will be much more struck with their likeness than with their unlikeness. In the present case the study of the books in a translation is not without advantage; for one of the methods by which those who hold both books to have proceeded from the same author account for the difference of Greek style, is by the hypothesis that this author who, it will be readily admitted, thought in Aramaic, employed in the two books different hands to translate his thoughts into Greek. If this were so, differences of style introduced by the translators would be apt to disappear when the books were translated into another language. Thus by examining the books in a translation we are able to separate their fundamental points of likeness or unlikeness from those peculiarities of diction for which it is possible not the author but his secretary may be responsible.

Of the striking agreement between the doctrine concerning our Lord taught in the Gospel and in the Apocalypse we shall speak a little later on; at present we deal with more superficial points of resemblance. The Evangelist lays particular emphasis on the piercing of our Lord's side at His crucifixion and the issuing therefrom of blood and water as an incident that he had witnessed himself (xix. 35). We have already seen that the Epistle also makes mention of the water and the blood (v. 6). Now in the very beginning of the Apocalypse we find a reference to the piercing of our Lord with a clear use of the same words of the prophet Zechariah that are expressly quoted in the Gospel; and it may be added that the two books agree in using the same translation of that prophet's words, not that of the Septuagint.

Let us return now to the opening words of the Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word." This title, "the Word," it will be observed, is used by the Evangelist only in his prologue; not only is it never put into our Lord's own mouth, but the disciples are never introduced as using it when speaking of Him. We have not laid stress on the fact that the Epistle also begins by speaking of "the word of life," because it admits of question whether this phrase is here to be understood as the name of a person; but there certainly is a coincidence with the prologue of the Gospel in the next verse of the Epistle, for the "eternal life who was with the Father," is clearly identical with "the Word who was with God." In the Revelation (xix. 11) our Lord is given the appellation "Faithful and true," and (v. 13) His name is said to be the Word of God. The former appellation sends

us back to Rev. iii. 14, where Jesus is spoken of as the “*faithful and true* witness, the *beginning* of the creation of God.” He is also called “*the beginning and the end*” (Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 13).

In connection with the word “*witness*” just quoted it must be mentioned that this is one of the favourite words of the Evangelist, occurring with him far more frequently than with any other New Testament writer; and that the same characteristic prevails in the Apocalypse. Another title commonly given to our Lord in the Book of Revelation is the “*Lamb*”; but this is also found in the Gospel, “*Behold the Lamb of God*” (i. 36). The cleansing power of the blood of Jesus finds startling expression in the Book of Revelation where the redeemed are described as having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (vii. 14); but the doctrine is also to be found in the Epistle, “*the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin*” (i. 7). The title “*Son of God*” which is so often given to our Lord in the Gospel, is ascribed to Him also in the Apocalypse (iv. 18).

There are many other coincidences of language; for instance, the phrase “*he that overcometh*,” which is of frequent occurrence alike in Apocalypse, Gospel, and Epistles (John xvi. 33; 1 John ii. 13, iv. 4, v. 4; Rev. ii. 7, 11, iii. 5, xii. 11, xxi. 7). The phrase “*keep my word*” (Rev. iii. 8, 10); “*keep my sayings*” (Rev. xxii. 7, 9) is a favourite with the Evangelist, but is not used by any other New Testament writer (John viii. 51, 52, 55; xiv. 23, 24; xv. 20; xvii. 6; 1 John ii. 5). The same imagery is employed in both books as to the thirst and hunger of the soul, and as to the means of supplying these needs. In the Revelation (ii. 17) Jesus promises believers “*the hidden manna*”; in the Gospel referring also to the manna, “*the true bread from heaven*”; and it may be added that this word “*true*,” in the sense of “*real*,” “*genuine*,” is another of the characteristic words of the Gospel also frequently occurring in the Apocalypse. So likewise our Lord’s cry in the Gospel (vii. 37), “*If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink*” is repeated in the Apocalypse (xxii. 17), “*Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*.”

But the close affinity of the two books comes out more plainly when we study the doctrinal characteristics of both.

5. *The Christology of Gospel and Apocalypse.*—We have already spoken of the difference of which every reader is conscious when he passes to the Fourth Gospel from the study of the preceding three. One point of difference is the predominance in the Fourth Gospel of the doctrinal over the narrative element. The three

synoptic Evangelists do not give us the impression of having any object in view, but simply to relate those deeds and words of our Lord which had most fastened themselves on His disciples' recollection. The Fourth Gospel is avowedly written with a purpose, namely, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name" (xx. 31). Accordingly, before telling anything of the earthly life of Jesus, the Evangelist begins by declaring the doctrine of His pre-existence. He was with God "in the beginning" before yet anything was created, for "through him all things were made." Clement of Alexandria, before the end of the second century, had expressed this difference in the statement that John, "feeling that the things pertaining to the body had been sufficiently declared in the previous Gospels, at the request of his friends and under the inspiration of the Spirit wrote a spiritual Gospel."

Assertions of our Lord's pre-existence run through the Gospel and are put into His own mouth. He repeatedly declares that He had been in heaven before His appearance on earth (iii. 13; vi. 33, 38, 51, 62; xvi. 28). He claims to have had glory with the Father before the world was (xvii. 5). He claims to be the only way through which men can have access to God (x. 9; xiv. 6). If the treachery of Judas seems to cast discredit on his Master's judgment of character, the Evangelist is careful to tell that He had never been deceived; for that "knowing what was in man," He had all along foreseen the traitor's faithlessness (ii. 24; vi. 67, 71; xiii. 4). If it seems incredible that men should be able to put to death one of supernatural power, the Evangelist records his Master's declaration that His death had been entirely voluntary: "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself" (x. 18). It is taught with equal distinctness that it was as a sacrifice for others His life was given (x. 11, 15; xv. 13; xi. 51, 52; 1 John iii. 16, ii. 2). Further "the Son" is represented as not only having been in the past the agent in the work of creation, but also as appointed to be in the future the administrator of judgment. All judgment has been committed unto the Son. It is at His voice the dead shall one day come forth, and by His authority that judgment shall be executed on them (v. 22—29). It follows that completely divine honour is claimed for Him; He and the Father are one (x. 30); all men are to honour the Son even as they honour the Father (v. 23).

It has seemed to some critics impossible that such a belief concerning Jesus of Nazareth should be entertained by one who, like the Apostle John, had been his companion during great

part of His earthly life. But this at least is certain, that the writer of the Apocalypse also held the doctrines just described. For the assimilation of the honours paid to God and to the Lamb see Rev. vii. 10, xx. 6, xxi. 22, 23, xxii. 1; for the execution of judgment by the Son see Rev. xix. 11, *sq.*; for the atonement made by His death Rev. v. 9; for his eternal existence xxii. 13.

But in truth the doctrines just stated were the beliefs of the Christian Church before either Gospel or Apocalypse was written. Paul associated with those who had been apostles before him, and must have known what they thought of their Master, but his teaching exhibits striking coincidence with that of the Gospel and Apocalypse which we are discussing. Thus with regard to the ascription to Jesus of divine honours, and even the use concerning Him of the name of God, see Rom. ix. 5; Phil. ii. 6; 2 Cor. viii. 14; Eph. v. 5; 1 Thess. iii. 11; on His pre-existence and His share in the work of Creation, 1 Cor. viii. 6 and Col. i. 16, 17; on His future judgment, 2 Cor. v. 10; on the voluntariness of His humiliation, 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 7; on the atoning efficacy of His blood, Rom. v. 9; 1 Cor. v. 7; Gal. iii. 13; Eph. i. 7. No book of the New Testament leads us to form any different opinion about our Lord.

With respect to the testimony to the dignity of our Lord's person borne in the Synoptic Gospels, not to quote such passages as Matt. v. 27, 28, 29, xxviii. 18—20, we content ourselves with the proof that these Gospels agree with St. Paul and with the Johannine books in teaching that it is Jesus Christ who shall preside at the Judgment of the Last Day. They represent Him as, in answer to a solemn adjuration by the high priest, professing Himself to be that Son of Man who was one day to come in the clouds of heaven as Daniel had prophesied. (Matt. xxvii. 65; Mark xiv. 62; Luke xxii. 66. See also Matt. xxiv. 30 xxv. 31, *sq.*) If Jesus had but represented Himself as exempt from the judgment to which all others must submit on the last day, that would have been to put in a very startling way a claim to absolute and unquestioned innocence of life; but when He goes further, and claims to be judge of the whole human race, the pretension would be ridiculous except on the supposition that Jesus was in nature quite different from other men.

It is to be owned that assertions of this uniqueness of our Lord's nature occur less frequently in the Synoptic Gospels than in the Fourth; but if the ancient opinion be correct that the Fourth Gospel was written by one acquainted with the others, and with the intention of supplementing their contents, then the mere fact that any point had been slightly touched on in the earlier Gospels would be reason enough for its being more fully

dwelt on in the latest Gospel. It will be well, therefore, to examine how far internal evidence supports the correctness of this ancient opinion; for it must be owned that this is a point on which modern critics are far from being agreed, many of those who believe the Fourth Gospel to have been written by the Apostle John not admitting that he could have been acquainted with any of the other Gospels.

6. *The Supplemental Character of the Fourth Gospel.* — Whether it be intended or not, the fact is certain that the Fourth Gospel is supplemental to the other three. These three resemble each other in general character, and have in common a number of incidents and discourses, even related in nearly the same words, so as to suggest that each Evangelist intended his work for readers not supposed to be likely to have met with the others. But it is quite exceptional if we find in the Fourth Gospel anything that had been recorded in the others; and when we do, there is usually some obvious reason for its insertion. Thus, though the miracle of feeding the five thousand related in John vi. had been told in the other Gospels, it is used by St. John to introduce a discourse which the previous Evangelists had not recorded. Except in this chapter St. John relates no miracle recorded in the other Gospels, while he gives six which they had not mentioned, the turning water into wine (ii.), the healing of the nobleman's son (iv.), the cure of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (v.), the giving sight to the man born blind (ix.), the raising of Lazarus (xi.), and the miraculous draught of fishes (xxi.).

Now the question is, can this avoiding of topics sufficiently dealt with in the other Gospels be reasonably ascribed to accident? If different persons had attempted independently to commit to writing the leading facts believed in in the Christian community concerning the life of its Founder, together with some specimens of His discourses, although some things might be omitted by one that were told by another, there surely would be a number which any two would agree in regarding as too important to be omitted. It would be a feat little less difficult than that in the old ordeals of walking blindfold amid hot ploughshares without touching any, if a narrator without knowledge of what three predecessors had told, managed to keep clear of everything they had related.

But we are under no temptation to avoid the most natural explanation of the characteristics of the Fourth Gospel now under consideration. For all critics agree in ascribing to this Gospel a date considerably later than that of any of the other three. Those who believe the Apostle John to have written it believe that he

did so at the very end of a long life—that is to say, not long before the end of the first century. Those who do not ascribe the Gospel to St. John place its date still later. In any case all believe that the other Gospels were in circulation at the time the Fourth Gospel was written, and if so, why should we imagine that its writer had not seen them?

One thing is certain, that this Evangelist takes for granted that his readers had already, through some source or other, become acquainted with the principal facts of the Gospel history. In the first chapter (ver. 40) he describes Andrew as Simon Peter's brother, taking for granted that Simon Peter was known. A reference to the Baptist (iii. 24) is accompanied by the parenthetical remark, "for John was not yet cast into prison," evidently intended for men who knew that John's career had been thus cut short, but who needed the explanation that the events which the Evangelist is relating occurred while the Baptist was still in activity. He does not directly tell of the appointment of the twelve apostles, but he assumes it as known (vi. 70): "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" His narrative does not inform us that Joseph was the reputed father of our Lord, but this appears incidentally when the Jews ask, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" (vi. 42; i. 45). The baptism of our Lord is not expressly mentioned, but is implied in the account the Baptist gives of his having seen the Spirit descending on Him (i. 32). The ascension is not related, but it is thrice referred to (iii. 13; vi. 62; xx. 17).

An argument may also be drawn from the omissions of the Gospel. It has been noticed that it does not relate the institution of either of the sacraments of Baptism or the Lord's Supper. But it is certain from other sources that both these institutions were established Christian rites at the comparatively late period when the Fourth Gospel was written. It would be strange if the Evangelist's silence about these rites were intended to disparage them, seeing that in point of fact no book has done more than this Gospel to raise the estimation in which these rites have been held in the Christian Church, a discourse in the third chapter having been commonly understood of the one, and one in the sixth of the other. It is therefore reasonable to believe that the reason why the Evangelist does not record our Lord's institution of these rites is because he knew that his readers had already other accounts in their hands.

If there can be any doubt on this point there seems room for none on the next point, viz., the silence of the Evangelist as to our Lord's birth at Bethlehem, and of the tribe of Judah. For

he does relate (i. 45; vii. 41, 52) that it was made a ground of objection to the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah that he was a Galilean, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother they knew (vi. 42), whereas it had been foretold that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem, and of the house of David. The Evangelist, as we shall presently see, believed in the Old Testament, and habitually takes pleasure in tracing the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies in the life of our Lord. We may be sure therefore that he himself believed that Jesus, whom he accepted as the Messiah, had been born as the prophets foretold He should. And he certainly would not have placed a stumbling block in his readers' way by telling them of the Jewish objection without ever telling them the true answer to it, unless he knew that they were already in possession of that answer in some more authentic shape than mere traditional rumour.

The examination made in the present section was necessary, because there can be no sound criticism of the Fourth Gospel without a correct decision of the question whether or not the author intended it as a complete account of the Saviour's life. It is an undoubted fact that the Fourth Gospel omits many things told in the previous Gospels, and relates much which they omit. It is necessary to decide whether on this account we are to regard this witness as at variance with his predecessors, or whether we are at liberty to combine what he and they have told, making the assumption that the later writer was designedly concise where his predecessors had been full, and full where they had been concise.

7. *The Evangelist was a Jew.*—The earliest dissension that we read of in the Christian community arose out of the opposition made by men of Jewish birth to the doctrine preached by Paul, namely, that the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been thrown down and that Jew and Gentile were thenceforward one in Christ Jesus. On this question the Fourth Evangelist takes his side with those who were in favour of the widest opening of the portals of the Christian Church. When a question was raised as to the rival claims of Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim our Lord is recorded as answering (iv. 21), "that the hour cometh, when ye shall neither at Jerusalem nor in this mountain worship the Father." Our Lord is represented as announcing (x. 16) that He had other sheep "not of this fold," whom also He must bring so that all should become one flock. Jesus is recorded as predicting (xii. 32) that He should draw all men unto him. His death is stated (xi. 52) to be not for the Jewish nation only, but "that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." The

Apocalypse likewise represents the redeemed (vii. 9), as a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues (see also v. 9).

Yet he who thus declares himself on the side of those who freely admitted Gentiles into the Church was, like St. Paul, of Jewish birth himself. We may gather this from his possessing a familiarity with the Old Testament, not easily gained by one who had not known the book from childhood. The testimony borne to Jesus by the Jewish scriptures is both appealed to in general terms (v. 39, 46; i. 45), and particular instances are specified of the fulfilment in Him of predictions of the prophets (xii. 15, 38—41; xix. 24, 36, 37; xx. 9). In one of these cases (xii. 15), where two previous Evangelists have simply recorded a fact without connecting it with the Old Testament, St. John quotes the prophecy which was thereby fulfilled, and remarks that the disciples had not at first understood that in what they were doing they were fulfilling a prophecy. Old Testament types of the Saviour's work are cited (iii. 14; vi. 32; xix. 36).

This Evangelist also lays on the Jewish feasts a stress not put on them in the other Gospels, telling of our Lord's attendance on many concerning which they had been silent (ii. 18, 23; vi. 4; vii. 37; x. 22). He exhibits acquaintance with Jewish customs and habits of thought (ii. 5; iv. 27; vii. 15, 35; viii. 48; ix. 2; xi. 55; xviii. 28; xix. 31). The Jews are claimed (i. 11) to be our Lord's "own" people; and in the very passage where the claims of spiritual religion, apart from any distinction of place or race, are most strongly set forth, the prerogatives of the Jew are asserted as strongly as they are by St. Paul himself when he has to answer the question, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" This Gospel puts into our Lord's mouth the words (iv. 22) "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for *salvation is of the Jews.*"

But though the Evangelist thus shows himself to be a Jew, he writes like one living among Gentiles, and at that late period, when the Christian community had become completely separated from the Jewish, so as to be known by different names. In a community where men of Jewish birth were in a decided minority, the title "the Jews" would come to be used to denote a distinction rather of religion than of birth. It is so used by St. Paul (1 Thess. ii. 14), who distinguishes "the Churches of God that are in Judea" from "the Jews," the latter being described as those "who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets and have persecuted us." In this sense the phrase "the Jews" is used repeatedly in the Fourth Gospel, as it also is in the First (xxviii. 15).

The conclusion to which we have just come is in full accordance

with the well-authenticated tradition that the Fourth Gospel is the latest of the four and that it made its first appearance in Asia Minor. But this work, though written at a distance from Jerusalem, exhibits minute acquaintance with the topography of the Holy Land. He mentions the following localities (some of them being but small places), and in some cases exhibits minute knowledge of them: Cana of Galilee (ii. 1, 2; iv. 46; xxi. 2); Bethsaida (i. 44); Bethany beyond Jordan (i. 28); Bethany, near Jerusalem (ii. 18); the city Ephraim, near the wilderness (xi. 54); *Ænon*, near to Salim, where John baptized (iii. 23); Sychar, the city of Samaria where Jacob's Well was (iv. 4). At Jerusalem the Evangelist knows the pool of Bethesda, near the sheep-gate, with its five porches, the treasury at the Temple, Solomon's porch, the pool Siloam, the brook Kedron, the place that is called the pavement but in the Hebrew Gabbatha, the place of the skull called in Hebrew Golgotha.

8. *The Date of the Gospel.*—We have already said that it cannot be placed in the very earliest days of the Church, but neither can it be placed, as some have done, so late as to be quite outside the limits of the apostolic age. We can at least say that it must be antecedent to the Gnostic heresies which broke out quite early in the second century. The problem that most occupied the minds of the Gnostic speculators was how to account for the origin of evil; and the solution they generally agreed in offering was that evil was inherent in matter. It followed that the creation of matter could not have been the work of the good God, and since the God of the Jews claimed the work of creation as His own, that He must be a being different from, and, according to many systems, hostile to the supreme God. Thus the authority of the Old Testament was rejected. Further, those who held these views found it impossible to believe that the Saviour could have assumed a material body, and so they were led to maintain that in His earthly life He was only in appearance like other men. Again, they could not believe that the existence of matter would be prolonged beyond the present life, and so they rejected the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. And as they conceived that perfection was to be attained through release from the dominion of matter, they inculcated an ascetic mode of life, abstinence from animal food and from wine, as well as from marriage through which the material life is perpetuated.

Now it is not merely that the Fourth Gospel gives no countenance to any of these theories, but there is no trace that the Evangelist had ever heard of them. The authority of the Old Testament is assumed as a matter about which there can be no question. The Temple which the Jews had built for the worship of their God is claimed by Jesus as His Father's house (ii. 16).

The resurrection of the body is plainly taught (v. 28), for the future life is not represented as resulting from the continuance of the soul, though separated from the body; but "they that are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth." No question as to the lawfulness of marriage is suggested as having been raised, but Jesus is represented as gracing a wedding feast with His presence. Jesus is represented as having a body subject to the accidents of weariness and thirst, and which even after His resurrection His disciples might handle (xx. 27; 1 John i. 1). The question concerning the lawfulness of animal food had been raised in St. Paul's time (Rom. xiv. 2), and had been treated by him as a harmless scrupulosity. The question of the lawfulness of marriage had been also discussed (1 Cor. vii. 1). And towards the end of his life the teachers of asceticism had become so troublesome as to need to be more severely dealt with (1 Tim. iv. 3). But these questions do not appear to have been under discussion in the circle for which the fourth Evangelist wrote. On the other hand, a docetic theory concerning our Lord's person, which some things in the Gospel might be used to countenance, had become formidable enough when the Epistle was written to need express condemnation, and the denial that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh was pronounced to emanate from the spirit of antichrist (1 John iv. 3; 2 John 7).

Another consideration which forbids our assigning a very late date to the Fourth Gospel is drawn from the fact that it is in some instances in real or apparent disagreement with the Synoptic Gospels. It is enough to mention one point, about which harmonists dispute to the present day, *viz.*, that the Synoptic narrative gives the impression that our Lord ate the Passover with His disciples on the night before He suffered, whereas St. John would lead us to think that He did not. Now if the Fourth Gospel had been composed at any time in the second century, a time when the other Gospels had had time to gain acceptance and to be generally received among Christians as the authentic account of their Master's life, the framer of this supplemental Gospel would have been careful to dovetail his work properly into the accepted story. He would not injure his chance of gaining credit for his new Gospel by deviating from what the Church had accepted as the true apostolic tradition. So that if objectors have been successful in attempts to find contradictions between the Fourth Gospel and the preceding three, the result would be not to overthrow, but to confirm the tradition as to the apostolic origin of the last Gospel. No one would venture to dispense with careful conformity to the established account but one whose own authority stood so high

that he had no need to consider what others had said before him.

The traditional account of the authorship of the Gospel is further confirmed by the perfect knowledge which the writer exhibits, how unlike the Messianic conception of a "Kingdom not of this world," which early came to be that of the Christian Church, was that expectation which prevailed among the Jews at the time of our Lord's coming, of a temporal deliverer who should restore sovereignty to their nation. This Evangelist tells that the impression produced by the miracle of feeding the multitude was such that they were about to come by force to make our Lord a king, and that He was obliged to withdraw Himself from their importunity to a mountain alone. He represents the prudent Jewish rulers as resolved to put down the prophesying of Jesus, because they feared that the political consequences of His assertion of His kingdom would be an unsuccessful revolt which would be disastrous to their nation (xi. 48). And he brings out the fact that it was as a pretender to temporal sovereignty that the Jews accused Him before Pilate, who, though personally inclined to dismiss the complaint, was withheld from doing so through fear of exciting the jealousy of his emperor by his remissness if in such a matter as this he showed himself not Cæsar's friend (xix. 12).

This state of Jewish feeling could scarcely have been so vividly represented except by one who had himself experience of it. But it was quelled by the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, so that we are led to think of the Fourth Evangelist as one who had lived through the time before that event. There was indeed a revival of Jewish national feeling leading to the unsuccessful rebellion under Barcochba, which was put down A.D. 135. But considerations already brought forward, besides those to be presently adduced, forbid us to place the Fourth Gospel so late.

9. *The Johannine Authorship.*—It is a fact with which we have got to deal that the Evangelist four times expressly claims to have been an eye-witness of our Saviour's life (i. 14; xix. 35; xxi. 24; 1 John i. 1). In one of these passages (xxi. 24) the author is identified with him whom it describes as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and even if there had not been this explicit declaration, the way in which that disciple is introduced, xiii. 23; xix. 26; xx. 2; xxi. 7, 20, and probably xviii. 15, irresistibly conveys the impression that the Evangelist wished the readers to understand that he himself was that disciple. It does not admit of serious question that by this disciple the Apostle John is intended. Now it is a curious feature of this Gospel, which records things said by Apostles of whom the other three Gospels tell us little (Philip, vi. 7; xiv. 8; Andrew, vi. 9; Thomas,

xi. 16 ; xiv. 5 ; xx. 25 ; Judas, not Iscariot, xiv. 22), that it not only never mentions by name the great Apostle John, but that when speaking of our Lord's forerunner, it does not, like the other Gospels, add the title "the Baptist," but describes him simply as "John," as if there were no other of the same name with whom there might be danger of confounding him. Now, whereas almost everyone in the Church would feel the necessity of distinguishing by some special name John the forerunner from John the Apostle, there was just one person who would not feel that necessity and could not form the habit, namely, the Apostle John himself.

The character of the book is exactly what it might have been expected to be if the author's claim were well founded to have been an eye-witness on intimate terms with the subject of the narrative. The book is full of minute particulars of time and place (iv. 6, 52; viii. 20; x. 23; i. 44; xii. 21; xviii. 10). The Evangelist tells what places the disciples were accustomed to resort to (xi. 54; xviii. 2; xx. 19), what they said to each other (iv. 33; xi. 16; xvi. 17; xx. 25; xxi. 3, 7), and what they thought (ii. 11, 17, 23; iv. 27; xiii. 22, 29).

The question has to be decided whether all the details in which the Fourth Gospel is so abundant are to be regarded as the real recollections of an eye-witness or as the fictions of an unscrupulous inventor. In support of the latter view stress has been laid on alleged contradictions between the statements of the Fourth Gospel and what has been asserted in the simpler and more credible story of the earlier Evangelists. But on examination the supposed contradictions are found to melt away, and are completely accounted for when it is recognised that it was St. John's purpose to supplement some omissions in the only narratives till then current in the Church.

One of the most striking points of difference is that the Synoptic narrative gives an account of but one year of our Lord's ministry, the scene of which, until the last week, is laid in Galilee, whereas St. John relates the events of more Passovers than one, and tells of more visits than one by our Lord to Jerusalem. But a study of the internal characteristics of the Gospels has led many modern critics to accept one of the oldest traditions concerning the Gospels, namely, that the basis of St. Mark's Gospel, and to some extent of St. Matthew's and St. Luke's also, is the account which St. Peter gave of what he recollects of his Master's life. Now it was the most natural thing in the world, that that account should begin by relating how he himself had been called on to forsake all and follow Jesus, becoming thenceforward His constant companion. The events of that memorable day fill the first chapter of St. Mark's Gospel. But

that day was after John the Baptist was cast into prison (Mark i. 14), and St. John undertakes (iii. 24) to tell much that took place before John was cast into prison.

Now, although if we had St. Mark's Gospel only we might take up the idea that Simon and Andrew, James and John, had not known Jesus until they received His command to leave their fishing and become fishers of men, yet no such statement is made by the Evangelist, and St. John, so far from contradicting, throws great light on the preceding narrative when he explains that it was not at the bidding of an unknown person that the disciples forsook all. We learn from the Gospel that before the disciples thus forsook their avocations to follow Jesus, they had already learned under the guidance of John the Baptist to recognise Jesus as the prophet who should come into the world. The three Synoptic Gospels had each related the descent of the Holy Ghost on our Lord at His baptism without stating on what testimony their narrative was founded. St. John informs us, what when we think on it seems most natural, that the Church learned this fact on the testimony of the Baptist himself, who though, as St. Matthew tells us, he had already known enough of Jesus to feel that He had no need of baptism of his, yet was then first assured that it was He who was to come baptizing with the Holy Ghost. Great stress is laid on this testimony of the Baptist, which is appealed to as part of His credentials by our Lord Himself (John v. 32). But the fact that John had been witness to Jesus is indirectly attested by the Synoptic Gospels, which give us to understand that there was such a connection between John and his Successor that any who acknowledged the Divine mission of the Baptist would be bound in consistency to own the authority of Jesus (Matthew xxi. 25; Mark xi. 31; Luke xx. 5).

If St. Mark's narrative might have led us to think of the calling of the Apostles to forsake their ordinary avocations as immediately following the Baptism, St. Luke's narrative would lead us to think that there was some intervening time, so that there is nothing to stumble at if St. John's narrative makes us understand that the interval was still longer than we might otherwise have supposed.

Neither is there anything to stumble at if we are told that during that interval our Lord attended feasts at Jerusalem. Nay, rather we should have cause for surprise if the fact were not so; if He whom St. Matthew records as having said that it became Him "to fulfil all righteousness," whom St. Luke relates to have been brought up by His parents to attend a feast while still a boy, neglected to fulfil this duty of ordinary Jewish obligation. Nor would it be strange if some of His Apostles, before

they had yet been called to be His daily companions, were at least His fellow-travellers in journeys which as devout Jews they would doubtless have made on their own account. It has been suggested that besides the religious motive for visiting Jerusalem, St. John as a fisherman would have commercial reasons for visits, and might in this way have become known at the high priest's palace (John xviii. 16). In any case our Lord's words, Matt. xxiii. 37, "How often would I have gathered thy children together," imply repeated visits to Jerusalem; and indeed it is not credible that if He had come to Jerusalem for the first time for that Passover in which He suffered, and had not given offence by rebukes on previous visits, the authorities of Jerusalem would have so speedily resolved on His destruction, or been able in so short a time to find means to bring it about.

Thus, although critics of the last generation had objected to the trustworthiness of St. John's narrative, because in the part just discussed, and in some others, it appeared to them inconsistent with the preceding Gospels, yet the result of a closer examination has been to bring Renan, and others by no means prepossessed in favour of traditional views, to the conviction that the Fourth Gospel cannot be neglected by any one who attempts to write the history of the life of Jesus, and that it deserves to be trusted even on some points on which it gives an impression different from that produced by the narrative of the earlier Evangelists. It is not possible that the Fourth Gospel could thus throw real light upon the earlier narrative unless the writer was possessed of first-hand information. We have then only to choose between the account which the Church has always received, viz., that this Gospel was written by an eye-witness, namely, the Apostle St. John; and the hypothesis of some modern critics that the author was an unknown disciple of St. John who embodied in this Gospel possibly some things he had heard from his master, together with inventions of his own.

In favour of the former view may be urged that no critic can mistake the traces of strong personal feeling under which the Evangelist writes, though he refrains from giving formal expression to it, the feeling of strong attachment to his Master, of indignation at the treachery of Judas, and at the preference given by the Jews to Barabbas. Attention must also be paid to the manner in which the Evangelist deals in his last chapters with the belief current among the disciples that Jesus had predicted that St. John should not die before His second coming. The Evangelist explains that the belief had originated in words of our Lord which did not necessarily guarantee any such promise, yet he refrains from saying that the belief was wrong.

This quite falls in with the account that the Gospel was written when St. John had attained a great age, but before he died.

Against the hypothesis that the Gospel was written by an unknown person is the evidence yielded by the third Epistle ascribed to St. John, which we have already found good reason to think was written by the author of the Gospels. This Epistle carries the evidence of its genuineness on its face by revealing a state of things which no forger had any motive for inventing, or was ever likely to imagine as possible. The writer, it appears, had sent brethren as bearers of a letter from him to a particular Church, and they, instead of being received with the hospitality usual among Christians, were treated as heretics, the man who claimed to take the leading part in the government of that Church actually threatening excommunication to any who should afford them hospitality. What uninspired writers tell with one consent about St. John is that he spent the last years of his life settled in Asia Minor, and ruling the Churches of that district. It is a conceivable thing that before his arrival he may have sent messengers with a letter, possibly from his place of banishment in Patmos; and as we know from the Epistles to the Corinthians and the Galatians that the Apostolic Church was not free from dissensions, there is nothing incredible in the supposition that the established rulers of the Asiatic Churches may at first have given an unfriendly reception to a new teacher.

But no one in the next century would be likely to imagine apostolic messengers meeting such a reception; and certainly it would be absolutely contrary to the interests of a forger to represent the hero of his fiction treated with disrespect. Assured as we are then that the Third Epistle is no fiction, but the real letter of a great Church ruler preserved after the circumstances which had drawn it forth had been forgotten, it follows at once that the author is no unknown person hiding his personality under the cover of a great name. He comes forward in his own person, claiming great authority, sending his legates to an old-established Church, and treating resistance to his claims on the part of the rulers of such Churches as idle "prating," which he is confident that by his presence he will at once put down. And according to all appearance his anticipations prove correct, and his rule over the Churches of Asia is completely acquiesced in. When such a man publishes a Gospel containing a clearly implied claim on the part of the writer to be the "disciple whom Jesus loved," we cannot suppose the claim to be made on behalf of some one else, but must regard it as exhibiting the grounds of the authority which the writer himself exercised. Those who deny him to have been the Apostle John are bound to tell who else he could possibly have been.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

1. *The Authorship of the Acts.*—It may be regarded as absolutely certain, even on the admission of the most sceptical critics, that the Acts of the Apostles was written by the same author as the Third Gospel, and that the writer of both was St. Luke. The book comes before us as the professed sequel to that Gospel, which is assigned to St. Luke by the Muratorian Fragment on the Canon (not later than A.D. 170), as well as by Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and others. The reception of the Acts of the Apostles by the earliest Christian writers, if not absolutely proved, is yet rendered extremely probable by the resemblance to phrases which it contains, and facts which it narrates, in the writings of Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Hermas, Polycarp, Dionysius of Corinth, Papias, Justin Martyr, and the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, all of whom wrote before the close of the second century.

It is true that not one of these references would be *singly* sufficient to demonstrate an acquaintance with the Acts, but their collective force is too strong to be rejected; especially as it is further strengthened by traces that the book was known to the Ebionites, to some of the early Gnostics, and to the Pagan scoffer Lucian, as well as to the Churches of Lyons and Vienne. The probability of the early dissemination of the Acts, established by these apparent allusions, is confirmed by the distinct evidence of the Muratorian Fragment. In a passage, of which the general meaning is clear, this ancient document directly attributes to St. Luke the authorship both of the Gospel and of the Acts. This “*Canon*” represents the testimony of the *Western* Church; and as the book was certainly known to Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who as a pupil of Polycarp represents the traditions of the *Eastern* Church, no doubt can be entertained as to the authenticity of the Acts.

The learned Eusebius of Cæsarea, to whom Church history owes so much, refers to the Acts as the work of St. Luke,

and as a book indisputably genuine (*όμολογόνμενον**). Of this fact no doubt was ever expressed till towards the close of the ninth century, when Photius makes the astonishing statement that, while some considered the book to have been written by Luke, others attributed it to Barnabas, or Clement of Rome. To conjectures so ignorant and baseless Photius himself attributes no importance, and he says that the question of the Evangelist's authorship is evident on the surface.

The only statement in any of the Fathers which can be regarded as derogatory to the authority of the Acts is the incidental remark of St. Chrysostom, at the beginning of his Homilies (A.D. 401), that many persons knew nothing of the existence of the book. Probably the remark only applies to persons at Constantinople, who may have been but recently converted, and who were probably very ignorant of all the sacred books except the Gospels. It must be remembered that manuscripts were rare and precious, and as the Acts was addressed to one individual it was less likely than other books to get into universal circulation. The suggestions that it was written by any other author than St. Luke have been so contrary to all available evidence, and have found so few followers, that it is quite unnecessary to enter into any serious refutation of them.

For indeed the internal evidence that the book was written by the Third Evangelist is even stronger than the external.

(i.) Both the Gospel and the Acts are prefaced by a carefully composed introduction in which the works are dedicated to a certain Theophilus, to whom in the Gospel is given the honourable title of "most excellent."

(ii.) In both treatises there is a remarkable identity of style. Nearly a hundred phrases and idioms are common to the Gospel and Acts. Some words seem to belong characteristically to St. Luke and St. Paul almost alone among the sacred writers. Thus the beautiful word *χάρις*, "grace" or "favour," does not occur in the first two Evangelists, and only in one brief clause of St. John (i. 14—17); but it occurs eight times in St. Luke's Gospel, seventeen times in the Acts, and very frequently in the Epistles of St. Paul.† The verb *χαριζομαι* occurs only in the Epistles of St. Paul and seven times in the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts.

(iii.) Further than this, it is a curious fact that St. Luke, both in the Gospel and the Acts, has *two* styles. His own proper style

* It also occurs ten times in 1 Peter—an Epistle which in many respects shows a Pauline tone.

† Euseb., *H. E.* iii. 25.

is more correct and classical than that of any other writer in the New Testament; but there are entire chapters, alike in the Gospel and the Acts, in which we find a totally different style, largely coloured by Hebraisms, which shows at once that the writer, by a method peculiarly his own, is incorporating written documents or has verbally taken down the testimony of eye-witnesses.

(iv.) Besides this curious unity of style and literary characteristics, there is a close resemblance in *tone* between the Gospel and the Acts. Both are marked by a fine geniality, a delicate insight, a singular sweetness, which becomes still more full of charm from its alliance with a fervid enthusiasm. The writer is a consummate artist who produces the greatest effect by the fewest touches. Partly because he is dealing with facts known to him either directly or mediately at first hand, and partly because he was endowed with a high but unconscious literary skill, he gives us the most vivid delineation of characters and events. Without any long descriptions or psychological analysis, Philip, Barnabas, Stephen, James, Herod Agrippa I., Felix, Festus, Herod Agrippa II., Gallio, and many other personages, both heathen and Christian, are made to stand out in distinct personality from the few brief pages which furnish us with so vast a range of priceless information.

(v.) There is further a unity of *thought* in the Gospel and the Acts. They reveal to us that the author was a man of large sympathies, who, in his general theology no less than in separate expressions, was attached to that view of the Gospel doctrine—that “Gospel to the Gentiles”—of which St. Paul was “the vessel of election.”

We may then regard it as unquestionable that St. Luke was the author of the Acts. With supreme modesty he entirely suppresses his own name, and he is only mentioned three times in Scripture, as “the beloved physician” (Col. iv. 14), the “fellow-labourer” and most faithful companion of St. Paul in his first and second Roman imprisonments (Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11). From the context of the first passage it has been inferred that he was not “of the circumcision,” and there can therefore be but little doubt that he was “a proselyte of the gate.” That he was a Syrian of Antioch is probable from internal evidence, as well as from the statements of Eusebius and Jerome; and if the reading “while *we* [ἡμῶν] were assembled together” in Acts xi. 28 be genuine,* he first made the acquaintance of St. Paul at Antioch.

* It is found in D (the Codex Bezae), and was known to Augustine.

All that we further know about him is deduced from those sections of the Acts in which he uses the word "we" throughout. These "we" sections, as they are called, show us that he joined the little missionary band of the Apostle at Troas (Acts xvi. 10), and, becoming one of the earliest Evangelists of Europe, accompanied him to Macedonia, probably in his character as "a physician," since at that time St. Paul had been suffering from an acute attack of his "thorn in the flesh." He seems to have stayed behind at Philippi (xviii. 1 "they"), where we still find him after a lapse of seven years (xx. 5). He was appointed one of the delegates to collect and convey to Jerusalem the contributions of the Gentile Christians (2 Cor. viii. 18), and he went with St. Paul to the Holy City (xxi. 18). It is probable that he stayed with St. Paul during his two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea, and that during that time his Gospel was partly written. He accompanied the Apostle on his disastrous voyage to Rome, and lived with him, in all probability, until his liberation.

Theophilus, to whom he dedicates his work, may have been the wealthy Antiochene Christian mentioned in the Clementines as having lent his house to St. Peter for Christian assemblies; and if so St. Luke may have been his physician-slave or freedman. Contractions, like Lucas for Lucanus, are common in the names of slaves. There is not the slightest evidence that he was a painter, and our earliest authority for his supposed martyrdom is a vague reference of St. Gregory of Nazianzus towards the close of the fourth century. That he was familiar with the sea is clear from the *accurate* though *unprofessional* allusions made in his minute descriptions of St. Paul's voyages, and it is not an unreasonable conjecture that he may have sometimes practised his healing art in the huge and densely-crowded merchant ships which whitened the Mediterranean with their sails during the summer months. His knowledge of medicine is abundantly illustrated by the medical language which is found in both of his writings, and which has even left some marked traces on the phraseology of St. Paul.

2. *The Main Subject of the Book.*—The contents are indicated by the title, "The Acts of the Apostles;" but whether this title came from the author himself or not is very uncertain. The manuscripts vary between "Acts;" "Acts of Apostles;" "Acts of the Apostles;" and "The Acts of the Apostles." "Acts" is the title given in the Sinaitic Manuscript, and is a name frequently used also in apocryphal literature, to describe what we would call "Memoirs." The book was quoted by the learned Clement of Alexandria as "Acts of the Apostles."

Strictly speaking the fuller title—The Acts of the Apostles—is not accurate. It errs by excess; for the eleven, as a body, play but a very subordinate part in the book, and of individual Apostles we hear very little except of St. Peter and St. Paul. The mention of St. John is quite incidental, and he only appears in a secondary capacity on three occasions (iii. 1; iv. ; xii. 2). The martyrdom of St. James the Elder is mentioned (xii. 2), but nothing further is told us about any of the rest of the eleven except St. Peter. On the other hand we have certain “acts” of the two deacons Philip and Stephen, and of James, the Lord’s brother.

(i.) But even the recorded “Acts” of St. Peter and St. Paul are extremely incomplete. St. Luke tells us nothing about St. Peter after the Council of Jesusalem, and makes no mention of his memorable dispute with St. Paul at Antioch, his subsequent journeys, or his martyrdom at Rome. And minute as are many of the details furnished about St. Paul, the Evangelist narrates but a tithe of his manifold adventures. If that part of the Acts which narrates his mission-labours deserves the title of “the Christian Odyssey,” it is an *Odyssey* both fragmentary and discontinuous.

Absolutely invaluable as a source of information respecting large portions of the Apostle’s life, yet the Acts does not even mention so much as one of his five scourgings with Jewish thongs; one only of his three beatings with Roman rods; one only of the three shipwrecks which preceded the one so elaborately recorded. Two only are mentioned of his traditional seven imprisonments.* Nothing is said of the night and day in the deep. There are even whole classes of the Apostle’s hardships and perils which are passed over without notice; such as the perils of rivers, perils of robbers, perils in the wilderness, perils among false brethren, and the miseries of hunger, thirst, fasting, and nakedness.†

It is still more singular that although St. Luke, as a friend of St. Paul during his long Roman imprisonments, must have been familiar with his letters, and may even have acted at times as his amanuensis, yet he does not so much as allude to the fact that the Apostle ever wrote a single Epistle. Titus was a beloved, faithful, and able companion of St. Paul, yet his name is unmentioned; nor does the writer allude, except very incidentally, to his own labours in the cause of the Gospel. Obviously therefore the Acts does not pretend to be a complete history. Considered in that light it would be fragmentary and

* Clem. Rom. *Ep. ad Cor.* 5, ἐπτάκις δεσμός φορέσας.

† 2 Cor. xi. 23—27.

imperfect. It is only by combining the numerous data of St. Paul's Epistles with the events narrated in the Acts that we are enabled to grasp their full significance, or to gain an adequate conception of all that the Apostle of the Gentiles was or did.

(ii.) How we are to account for this phenomenon will be seen in the 5th and 6th sections of this chapter, when we deal with the object which the writer had in view, and the method which he adopted. Meanwhile we may pause to observe that the avowed fragmentariness of the narrative furnishes us with the most ample and unsuspected means for testing its accuracy. That it was written independently of St. Paul's Epistles is admitted, and it is certain that errors would have been detected in hundreds of incidental allusions if the narrative had not been entirely faithful. As it is, the separate details furnished by the Epistles furnish us with a multitude of undesigned coincidences, and may be tesselated with St. Luke's narrative into a perfect mosaic. Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ* has furnished a striking proof, and one that might be indefinitely elaborated, that the Acts can thus stand the severest test of comparison in the minutest details with a series of genuine and (so to speak) accidental compositions of the very Apostle with whom the narrative is mainly concerned.

(iii.) The book covers a period of about thirty years in the history of Christianity, from the Ascension, in A.D. 33 of the received chronology, to the close of St. Paul's first Roman imprisonment, about March, A.D. 63. We see at a glance that it falls into two great sections, of which the first (i.—xii.) is mainly occupied with the work of St. Peter; and the second (xiii.—xxviii.) is devoted almost exclusively to the missions, sufferings, and controversies of St. Paul. On another principle of division we might regard the first section as consisting of chapters i.—ix. 31, which narrate the establishment of the Church in Palestine; and the second from ix. 32 to the end of the book, as designed to tell the history of the extension of church membership to Gentiles, and the radiation of the Church over Asia Minor, Greece, and the Western world as far as Rome.

(iv.) The first fourteen verses are introductory. We may infer their preciousness from the fact that in these alone we learn that only forty days elapsed between the Resurrection and the Ascension. They mention the inauguration of the kingdom, and record Christ's "promise of the Father" and of "the baptism by the Holy Ghost." These were the true secret of that stupendous victory gained over the world "by the irresistible might of weakness" which sceptical historians have vainly endeavoured to explain. The eighth verse might well stand as

the motto for the whole book: "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." The first section of the book records the fulfilment of the earlier part of this promise, and carries us down to the conversion of St. Paul; the latter portion of the book illustrates the triumphant beginnings of its complete and final accomplishment.

(v.) The analysis of the book is, briefly, as follows:—

Introduction. i. 1—3.

I. *The Founding of the Church* (i. 4—ii. 47).

The Ascension and last instructions of Christ (i. 4—ii.); the election of Matthias (i. 12—26). The Day of Pentecost and the state of the primitive Church (ii. 1—47).

II. *The Church in Jerusalem* (iii.—vii.).

Miracles, testimony, and sufferings of St. Peter, together with the first persecutions (iii.—v. 42).

The election of deacons (v. 1—7).

The Acts of St. Stephen (vi. 8—vii. 60).

III. *The Church in Judea and Samaria* (viii.—ix. 43).

The Acts of Philip; the visit of Peter and John to Samaria; the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (viii.).

The conversion of Saul (ix. 1—30).

The Acts of Peter at Lydda and Joppa (ix. 31—43).

IV. *The Transference of Church Membership to the Gentiles*.

The vision of Peter and the conversion of Cornelius (x.).

The objections of Jewish particularism broken down (xi. 1—18).

The capital of Christianity gradually transferred from Jerusalem to Antioch, by the combined work of Barnabas and Saul (xi. 19—30).

Persecution of Herod Agrippa I. Martyrdom of James. Death of Herod (xii.).

V. *The Church among the Gentiles, and their relation to the Jewish Christians*.

α First missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas through Cyprus, Pamphylia, and Pisidia (xiii., xiv.).

The Council of Jerusalem (xv. 1—35).

β Second missionary journey of Paul with Silas and Timothy to Asia Minor and Europe (xv. 36—xviii. 22).

γ Third missionary journey to Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece, and Paul's return to Jerusalem (xviii. 23—xxi. 16).

VI. Final Acts of St. Paul.

His arrest, imprisonment, and defence before the Sanhedrim (xxi. 17—xxiii. 11).

His removal to Cæsarea, and his trials before Felix, Festus, and Herod Agrippa II. (xxiii. 12—xxvi. 32).

His disastrous journey to Rome (xxvii. 1—xxviii. 15).

His imprisonment and work at Rome (xxviii. 16—31).

(vi.) But an analysis alone can give no impression of the historical value of the facts recorded. St. Luke, and he alone, enables us to take our stand by the very cradle of the infant Church. Even in the first chapter we learn the priceless details that the disciples who first met at Jerusalem were only one hundred and twenty in number; that the free attendance of holy women at that earliest gathering inaugurated a new era of emancipation for half the human race; and that the Resurrection—for obviously no other adequate explanation can be suggested—had so powerfully affected the minds of “the Brethren of the Lord,” that, whereas they had hitherto been cold if not hostile to His Messianic claims, they henceforth left the world to which they had once belonged,* and braving its hatred flung in their lot with the followers of the obscure and persecuted Galileans.

(vii.) How important again is the account of the sweet and simple lives of the early believers; of their mistaken attempt at communism, and its implied failure; of the wise attitude adopted by Rabbi Gamaliel, the worthy grandson of the noble Hillel; of the brilliant career and eloquent speech of St. Stephen, which is the earliest attempt at a complete philosophy of Jewish history; of the first persecution; of St. Paul’s conversion; of the epoch-making vision of St. Peter at Joppa, which practically decided that Christianity was not to be a Jewish sect, but the religion of the world; of the manner in which the narrow and rigid Judaism of the Pharisaic Christians of Jerusalem was gradually expanded into universality; of the abandonment of insistence on circumcision and on the distinctive signs of Jewish proselytism, which was extorted, by the revelation of God in history, even from the strict Judaic attitude of St. James the Lord’s brother; of that first Christian Council at Jerusalem, which was to be the precursor of such numerous gatherings, but in which laymen no less than presbyters took a prominent part!

How instructive again is the glimpse which St. Luke gives us that the bold initiative of preaching to uncircumcised Gentiles was due to unknown disciples who had been scattered by the very persecution in which the future Apostle of the Gentiles had taken the foremost place! †

How much should we have lost had we not learnt from his pages the origin and first use of the name “Christian,” once a

* John vii. 4; Mark iii. 21, &c. † xi. 20; read “Greeks.”

mark of shame and the synonym of "malefactor," but afterwards the noblest of all titles, and a work which in its Greek, Hebrew, and Latin elements—being as it was a Greek translation of a Hebrew conception fitted to a Latin termination—bore a witness to Jesus from the three great languages of the ancient world.

Again St. Luke shows us how first, in the person of St. James the Elder, Christianity stood before kings and was not ashamed, and how the sudden death of a royal persecutor fulfilled the prediction that "he who fell on the stone of Christianity should be broken in pieces, and he on whom it fell should be scattered as dust."

(viii.) In the second great division of the book we watch the first eagle-flight of the young spirit of missions; we see the heroism, the endurance, the poverty, the persecution of the first missionaries; we see the messengers of heaven step from their ship for the first time upon the soil of Europe, and watch them as with the eye of a personal witness, while they passed from city to city of the Roman world. Then we sail with St. Paul through the isles of Greece to Jerusalem; we stand with him before the Jewish mob, before the Sanhedrim, before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, and almost seem to share his long stormy voyage from Cæsarea to his shipwreck at Malta, and thence to the hired room which was his prison at Rome.

(ix.) Thus the Acts of the Apostles is a book of the *Origines Christianæ*. It tells us of the Ascension with fuller details than had become known to St. Luke when he wrote the Gospel; of the first co-opted Apostle, St. Matthias; of the first Apostle who was consecrated neither of man nor by men, but by the Holy Ghost—St. Paul; of the first Pentecost; the first Christian sermon; the first Christian miracle; the first general baptism; the first persecutor; the first martyr; the first mission; the first confirmation; the first thorough breaking down of the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles; the first attempt at simony; the first deacons; the first heretic; the first baptized Gentile convert; the first European Church; the first Christian Council; the first attempt at ecclesiastical organisation; the first transference of the capital of Christianity to a Gentile city. Thus the whole book becomes a comment on one of its own phrases, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (xix. 30), while it shows us that the two best evidences of the truth of the Gospel are those which still stand visibly before the whole world, namely, Christianity and Christendom.

(x.) These facts alone will show how terrible a blank would have been left had we not been furnished by the Third Evangelist with this First Ecclesiastical History—the first and also by far

the best and greatest, brief and discontinuous as it is. It has been well observed that only from the Acts of the Apostles are we able to understand that union of the apparently antagonistic elements of Judaism and Christianity, which would otherwise be as impossible to explain as a confluence of the waters of the Tiber and the Jordan. To very few since the world began has it been granted to render to mankind two services so unique as those rendered by the retiring and modest Evangelist. In his Gospel—"the most beautiful book in the world"—he has given us an exquisite picture of the Saviour of Mankind; and in the Acts—narrating events of which he was often an eye-witness, and in which he took so honourable a share—he has used his sacred gifts of patient research, keen insight, lucid expression, and large-hearted catholicity, to enable us to watch the dawn of Christianity as it broadened and brightened into the boundless day. The Gospel and the Acts occupy but a few pages, but those few pages are among the most valuable which were ever penned by a human hand.

3. *Where was the book written?*—The place where the book was written cannot be stated with any certainty, but as it suddenly drops the curtain upon St. Paul after he had spent two years as a prisoner in his own hired room at Rome, it is at least possible that it was written during the enforced leisure which the Evangelist enjoyed during that period, and may have been given to the world at the conclusion of those two years, about A.D. 63.

4. *What were the sources on which St. Luke depended?*—The answer to this question furnishes an illustration of St. Luke's method. It was obviously not his object to narrate all the facts with which he must have been acquainted. He *selected* his materials, partly no doubt because he made it his literary habit to do so, but partly because he had special objects in view. At the beginning of his Gospel he lays claim to that thorough knowledge which is derived from careful and independent research. In writing the Acts he relies partly on facts which he had observed as an eye-witness, and partly on those which he had derived from trustworthy sources. The "we sections" (xvi. 10—xvii. 1, and xx. 5—xxviii. 31) are broken by the years which St. Luke appears to have spent at Philippi, but they are marked by the inimitable detail and vividness which are intrinsic signs of truth. For all the later portions of his history he could rely on the personal testimony of St. Paul, obtained during long hours of daily familiarity. If, as seems probable, he was with St. Paul during his incarceration at Cæsarea, he would there have had ample opportunities of seeing and consulting the members of the Churches of Palestine, who had been familiar from the first with

the origin and progress of the new faith. His circumstances as well as his gifts placed him in an uniquely favourable position for carrying out his sacred task.

How well he used his advantages is shown by his marvellous accuracy in numbers of details which have but a remote bearing on his general purpose. We have already seen that this accuracy is signally vindicated by the subtle coincidences of his narrative with the conditions indicated by the Epistles of St. Paul—coincidences all the more remarkable because they sometimes depend on apparent contradictions. Considering how complicated and incessant were the journeyings, labours, and afflictions of the great Apostle, nothing is more certain than that no forger could have written a sketch of them without coming into contact and violent collision with facts; and also that no human ingenuity could have invented the minute particulars of resemblance and verisimilitude, even if the Epistles had lain open before him as he wrote.

But this is not all. St. Luke can be tested, in hundreds of instances, by secular as well as by sacred history, and that from the most unsuspected sources; and he triumphantly stands the test. It is not only from St. Luke, but also from Josephus, the Talmud, Tacitus, Suetonius, Seneca, and other sources, both Jewish and Pagan, that we learn something about the crowd of personages who pass each other so swiftly on the stage of his vivid narrative. The pen of an obscure provincial—of one who had perhaps been a slave at Antioch—might well have slipped in delineating characters so various, and historical surroundings so diverse, as those of the Rabbi Gamaliel; the High Priest Ananias; the Idumean family of Princes, Herod Agrippa I., and Agrippa II., and Bernice, and Drusilla; Roman procurators, like Felix and Festus; proconsuls, like Gallio, the brother of Seneca, and Sergius Paulus; officers, like Claudius Lysias and Julius the centurion;—yet there is not one sketch which we can test that is not thoroughly and even minutely accurate.

Another proof of his historic care is that he does not content himself with general titles, but in each city or province gives the exact designation of the governing authorities, however unique or rare. Thus he speaks of the *Protos* of Malta; the Recorder and Asiarchs of Ephesus; the purely local “*Praetors*” (as they delighted to call themselves) at Philippi; and even the Politarchs at Thessalonica. In some of these instances his accuracy has been challenged, and has only been vindicated by minute historic investigations, and sometimes by the unexpected discovery of coins, medals, and inscriptions.

The arch of Thessalonica, now in the British Museum, the excavations at Ephesus, the inscription at Soli which bears the

name of Sergius Paulus, discovered by General Cesnola, are all unsuspected witnesses of his truthful care; and Jewish and Pagan historians bear him out to the letter in his account of the famine in the days of Claudius; the vanity and the strange death of the popularity-hunting Agrippa I.; the cosmopolitan *insouciance* of his son, Agrippa II.; the greed of Felix; the fairness of Festus; the disdainful retirement of Gallio; the existence of an Italian band at Cæsarea; Claudius's decree for the expulsion of Jews from Rome; the dialect of Lycaonia; the traces left by the local legends of Baucis and Philemon, in the antique Paganism of that rude district; the silver *aediculae* of Artemis, which formed a staple trade at Ephesus; the Ephesian love of amulets and magic; the colonial privileges of Philippi; the mode of dealing with Roman prisoners, and the minutest details of ancient navigation.

Places so obscure as the Fair Havens and Lasæa at Crete can still be identified by the indications of St. Luke; and he has been proved to be exact even in so small and remote an incident as the soundings, the nature of the bottom, and the conformation of the shore off Point Koura, on the north-east side of the island of Malta.*

5. *What was St. Luke's object in writing the Acts?*—The first and simplest answer to this question is, of course, that St. Luke had received the charism of a sacred historian, and wished to delineate "alike the individual, the congregational, and the ecclesiastical life of the Christians." With a prophetic conviction of the awful importance of events which occupied but a very small portion of the world's attention, he determined to commit to writing, for the benefit of Theophilus and of the Church in general—but with special reference to Gentile Christians—the things which he had seen and known. No one felt more strongly than St. Luke that the course of the world's history was being guided, not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts. The Holy Spirit is alluded to more frequently than in any other book of the Bible—no less, indeed, than seventy-one times. The Acts might almost be called "the Gospel of the Holy Ghost."

But beside this general object I see no reason to doubt that he was guided by special considerations.

It has been charged against St. Luke, almost as if it were a

* It is true that there is an unsolved difficulty about Theudas (Acts v. 36), in which St. Luke has fallen into an anachronism if he and Josephus are speaking of the same person and if Josephus is right. But there is no proof that the Theudas of St. Luke may not be a different person; and if the Theudas intended be the same, we have far more reason to trust St. Luke than to trust the careless and often untrustworthy Jewish historian.

crime, that the *Acts* is a “tendency-writing,” that it was expressly meant to serve as an *eirenicon*. Impressed with the holy and beautiful ideal of unity, simplicity, and peaceful gladness in the Church of Christ, he sets forth the attainment of that ideal, and renders it more possible by his mediating point of view. There was nothing otherwise than noble in such an aim, nor is St. Luke’s credibility as an historian thereby more disparaged than that of any other great and honest historian who has written with an avowed bias. The truth seems to be that no great history can be written except by men of keen sensibilities and strong convictions. A cold and passionless neutrality cannot inspire the interest necessary for historical research, and all that we demand of an historian is that the view which he presents, even if it be incomplete, should yet be founded on real facts, and not upon their perversion.

Now it is undoubtedly true that in the Epistle to the Galatians, and other Epistles of St. Paul, we find traces of a more bitter antagonism between “the circumcisionists” (*οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι*, Gal. vi. 13), as he calls them, and the party of Christian freedom, of which he was the head. But however severe may have been the struggle, however fierce the heart-burnings (and if St. Luke passes over these with comparative lightness, he yet by no means conceals the fact that they existed), they did not preclude the spirit of a deeper unity. St. Luke, no doubt, meant to illustrate this Catholic ideal, which was nobly rendered possible by the mutual concession and forbearance of St. Paul on the one side and of the elders of the Church of Jerusalem on the other.

It must be remembered that St. Luke’s narrative is extremely brief, and traverses a vast extent of ground. Under such circumstances it was natural that subjective considerations should have played their part in the selection and arrangement of his facts and narratives. If St. Luke had a bias, it was a bias far nobler, and one which gave a truer picture than could have been given from the standpoint of philosophic indifference. Under the conflicting views and partial divergences which arose among the teachers of the early Christian Church there lay a more fundamental and eternal agreement, and to Luke this great ocean of Christian unity seemed to be, as indeed it was, of far greater significance than the transient ripples which swept its surface. When there is partial disunion and profound brotherhood a noble mind, believing that the brotherhood belongs to what is true and permanent while the disunion is only partial, accidental, and superficial, will dwell mainly on the former, without making any attempt to suppress the existence of the latter.

6. *What Method does the Author follow?*—This draws our attention to two questions.

i. St. Luke has been charged, not only with producing a picture which was purposely toned down to disguise the differences of opinion between the Judaic and Christian party in the Church—a charge which rests on complete misapprehension of the scope of his work—but with the graver fault of manipulating his narratives so as to suggest an unreal parallel between the two great Apostles whose acts he chiefly sets forth. Thus, it is said, both St. Peter and St. Paul heal a cripple; they both raise the dead; they both confront sorcerers; the prominent events in the life of both are preceded by visions; both are at times severe; both are worshipped. The answer to this charge is very simple. So far as there is any resemblance between “the signs of an Apostle” wrought by either of them, they are resemblances which arise from the analogous circumstances by which they were surrounded, and the analogous gifts with which they were endowed. Moreover, the slightest examination suffices to show that the *differences* of the events and *miracles* are at least as observable as their general likeness.

ii. St. Luke's method has been described by the German word *sparsamkeit*, which implies the economical selections of those details only which seemed alike illustrative and permanently valuable, with the further conditions that he could vouch for them if possible by personal testimony, or, if not, by documents or information of indisputable authority. The special points on which he desired to lay emphasis have been variously stated because his book is many-sided in its character. We may safely assert that his primary object was to illustrate the growth of Christianity in the Church itself and its spread throughout the world, and to show that this was due to “the power of Christ's resurrection” and the grace of the Holy Spirit. All other objects were subordinate to that of setting forth how Christianity burst the swaddling-bands of Judaism, and conquered the hostility of the heathen. In furtherance of this design the book begins at Jerusalem and ends at Rome; it begins when Christianity is still a strictly Jewish sect of the circumcised consisting of one hundred and twenty persons, and it ends when converts could be counted by thousands, and all Gentile Christians were authoritatively emancipated from the minute and burdensome requirements hitherto demanded of all proselytes to the Mosaic law.

iii. Judged from this point of view there is no real abruptness in the close of the Acts. It ends with a word of the most weighty and sonorous cadence, *ἀκωλύτως*, an *epitrite* (ο---) evidently chosen as a suitable termination; just as the word *ἐπειδηπερ*, an *antispastus* (ο---ο), is, in accordance with ancient laws of taste, chosen as the first word of the Gospel. We may be sure that St. Luke ends where he intended to end, and by breaking off at

that point he has given to his treatise a magnificent unity. He has shown us how, in thirty years, the Gospel had passed from the capital of Judæa to the capital of the world ; how it made conquests alike among Samaritans, Greeks, Asiatics, and Romans ; how it had, with Divine adaptability, met the needs of learned Athenian philosophers and great Jewish rabbis, no less than those of the poor and ignorant Lystrenian peasantry ; how the sceptre of righteousness had (so to speak) been transferred from the hands of the Jew to those of the Gentile ; how the centre of gravity of the Universal Church had been shifted from the exclusive Semitic city to the huge metropolis of the ancient world.

iv. It is no doubt strange that St. Luke sheds no gleam of light on the result of St. Paul's trial at Rome, or on any of his subsequent fortunes. The curtain drops quite suddenly, and we cannot but deeply regret the absence of even one more sentence which would have saved reams of future and apparently endless controversy. We are left to conjectures in order to explain the sudden silence. Did St. Luke merely break off at the point to which he had brought down his narrative when his book first saw the light ? Did he intend to add a third book to the previous two ? Did he himself die at the close of St. Paul's first two years at Rome ? Was he prevented from carrying the narrative further by the terrible outbreak of the Neronian persecution, which reduced Christianity to the condition of a *religio illicita*, and which would render the possession of any Christian book extremely perilous.

This is perhaps the most probable of these vague conjectures. When the heathen were raging against Christianity with the virulence of which we read the traces in Tacitus, and Juvenal, and Martial, and Suetonius, and Pliny, a single *traditor* might hand over to the Roman agents a book which would suffice to involve a whole Christian community in ruin, unless all expressions unfavourable to the Government were concealed in strange cryptographs unintelligible to the Pagan world, as was the Apocalypse of St. John. Even if St. Luke did not himself perish in the Neronian persecution in Rome, or in one of its local outbursts in the provinces, it would have been impossible for him to write with historic plainness of the guilty Emperor, that diademed Wild Beast of the Revelation, who revelled in the blood of the saints and martyrs.

7. *When was the Book written ?*—We have nothing but internal evidence to rely upon for the answer. It was almost certainly written before the fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, for it is scarcely conceivable that otherwise there should have been no allusion to an event which shook the whole religious world far more power-

fully than the Pagan world was shaken by the sack of Rome in A.D. 410. There is not so much as a single allusion to imply that the Holy City was not still existing and flourishing when the book appeared. We have therefore good reason to believe that it was permitted to see the light as soon as it was finished, and that this was soon after the period at which it closed.

8. *Characteristics.*—I will conclude with two remarks.

One is the poetic grandeur which attaches, if not to the composition of the book itself, yet to the historic circumstances which it so vividly narrates. One of the finest descriptions in the mighty iambics of Greek tragedy is that in which *Æschylus* tells how the fire-signals of Agamemnon flashed from hill to hill the message of the fall of Troy, and how the “courier-flame” gleamed from Ida, and leapt over the sea till its last blaze from the summit of Cithæron aroused the watchman on the roof of the Atridæ. The story of the Acts has always reminded me of this noble scene. St. Luke, a poet and more than a poet, sets forth with exquisite skill how the beacon-lights of Christianity shone from Jerusalem to Antioch, and from Antioch to Ephesus, and to Troas, and then, leaping over the sea to Philippi, gleamed on to Athens and Corinth, until at last they were kindled in the very palace and Prætorian camp of the Cæsars in Imperial Rome. The beam of dawn which had shone amid the wintry darkness at Bethlehem had broadened so gloriously that in one short generation it had filled Asia, Greece, and Italy with the light of heaven.

Lastly, the Acts of the Apostles, besides its supreme historic interest and importance, is full of the deepest spiritual lessons. Luther said with justice that it might be regarded as nothing less than a comment on the Epistles of St. Paul. Church history often furnishes very sad reading, except to those who delight in the growth of formalism. But this faithful and glowing history of the Church's earliest days shows us her pure ideal before her orange-flower had begun to fade. It reveals to us the true secret of the Church's invincibility as consisting in her simplicity, her sincerity, her faith and courage even in the midst of savage persecution. It shows us that “God is the only final public opinion,” and that “one with God is always in a majority.” Never can the golden candlestick of any Church be removed if it be true to the high lessons of faith, and hope, and love, which enabled the Church of the Apostles to triumph over the banded antagonism of the world's vice and hatred, and to prevail, not only over the idolatry without, but also over the false types of orthodoxy and false types of goodness which sometimes arise within her fold.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
ROMANS.

1. *Paul's Desire to Visit Rome.*—That the Apostle of the Gentiles should cherish a desire to preach Christ at Rome was to be expected. Until he could unfurl the Christian flag in the imperial city he must have felt himself delayed among the outposts, not penetrating to the citadel. He had always pursued the plan of visiting the busiest centres of population, and this plan necessarily led his thoughts to Rome. It was the true metropolis, to which every road led, which received from all the provinces whatever was of interest or value, and distributed to the world law, order, civilisation. Even while living in Ephesus he felt himself gravitating to the greater city. Even then he expressed it as his fixed resolve, “I must also see Rome” (Acts xix. 21). Often prevented from accomplishing this purpose (Rom. i. 13), delayed by the claims of the churches he had founded in Asia and Macedonia, he at last sees some prospect of being able to set his face westwards, and hopes to reach even Spain (Rom. xv. 23).

Only one duty remained for him to discharge before starting; he must carry to Jerusalem the funds which the Christians of Macedonia and Achaia had collected for the poor of the holy city. This was a duty he could not delegate, because he was in hopes that the charity and brotherliness of the Gentile Christians might knit together the Jewish and Gentile sections of the Christian community, and might thus accomplish more than his own reasonings had accomplished, or at any rate might form a living union between parts his reasonings had outwardly stitched together (Rom. xv. 20—28). As soon as these funds were handed over to the authorities at Jerusalem he meant to start for Rome. In this expectation he was disappointed, and ultimately reached the metropolis as a prisoner, after two years' detention in Cæsarea.

But before leaving Corinth for Jerusalem he writes this Epistle to the Romans to intimate his intention, and as far as possible to pave the way for his teaching.

2. *Date.*—From the Book of Acts (xx. 1—3) we learn that Paul's journey to Jerusalem with the contributions for the poor saints was made at the close of his wintering in Corinth, and presumably in the spring of the year 59 A.D. This also was the date of his letter to Rome, which he sent apparently by the hand of Phoebe (xvi. 1), a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea, the port of Corinth. He wrote it while living in the house of Gaius (xvi. 23), who was a Corinthian (1 Cor. i. 14). It would also appear from 2 Tim. iv. 20 that Erastus, who sends his salutations to the Christians in Rome (xvi. 23), was chamberlain of Corinth.

3. *The Church in Rome.*—Such being the immediate occasion of this Epistle its contents would necessarily be determined by the character of the Church to which it was addressed. Unfortunately very little is known of the origin and constituent elements of the Church in Rome. For more than a hundred years there had been a large and growing and influential Jewish population in Rome, and this population was necessarily in regular communication with Jerusalem. Jews from Rome heard Peter preach at Pentecost, and when they returned to the capital they no doubt carried with them the Gospel they had heard. And so far the tradition which ascribes to this Church a Petrine origin is probably correct. The nucleus of a Christian community thus formed would be augmented in the natural course of the ceaseless communication which was maintained between Rome and the outlying provinces. And yet from the account given us in the Book of Acts (xxviii. 17) of Paul's reception in Rome, it would appear as if even at that time, nearly thirty years after Pentecost, the leading Jews of Rome knew little of the Christian Church or its tenets. This ignorance on their part, whether real or feigned, cannot be accepted as evidence that there were no Jewish Christians there. For both the edict of Claudius, which a few years before had expelled the Jews from Rome on the ground of riots connected with Christianity (*Chresto impulsore*), and the massacre of the Christians by Nero in the year 64 A.D., show that, though little might be known of their belief, Christians were recognised as an appreciable element in the Roman population, and that to a casual observer the Christians and the Jews were not distinctly separable.

4. *Gentile and Jewish Elements.*—If we examine the Epistle itself with a view to discover whether the Jewish or the Gentile element predominated in the Church at Rome, we are led to the conclusion that while the majority of the Christians were Gentiles,

there were also in the Church many Jews and proselytes. Among those to whom Paul sends salutations are kinsmen of his own, who must, therefore, have been pure-blooded Jews (xvi. 7). There are also Aquila and Priscilla, Mary and Apelles, all Jewish names (cf. Horace, *Sat.* I. v. 100). The majority of the names are, however, Gentile, and for the most part Greek.

At the date of Paul's Epistle the active, pushing, and pliable Greek was possessing himself of every department of commercial and social enterprise in Rome, so much so that shortly after this time the Roman satirist upbraids the metropolis with having become a Greek city (Juv., *Sat.* iii. 60). It is not surprising, then, to find that the names in this letter are Greek rather than Latin, that the language used, both in this letter and in the earliest literature of the Church of Rome, is Greek, and that in the catacombs the Greek characters so often appear in the inscriptions. The same mingling of Jew and Gentile in the Christian community at Rome is apparent in the substance of the Epistle. Sometimes Paul explicitly addresses himself to Gentiles, as in xi. 13; xv. 16; i. 13; sometimes it is obvious that he has Jews in view as he writes, as in ii. 17; iv. 1.

5. *The Type of Christianity at Rome.*—But it is not enough to determine the proportion which the Christians of Gentile origin bore to those of Jewish origin in the Church at Rome; it must, if possible, also be determined what type of Christianity they had adopted. Did the Pauline or the distinctively Jewish Christian view of the Gospel prevail? In other words, did they believe that Gentiles in order to become Christians must first become Jews, or did they understand that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile?

Lipsius (*Protestantenbibel*) thinks that everything in the Epistle is meant for Jewish Christian readers. The writer, he says, "assumes throughout that he is addressing readers of Jewish education who are also accustomed to the Jewish methods. The hypotheses from which he sets out, the conceptions with which he works, the arguments from the maxims and examples of the Old Testament Scripture, the express appeal to the reader's knowledge of the law—all this is only intelligible if the Apostle wishes to influence the Jewish Christian mind. . . . The Pauline Gospel can have had few, if any, adherents at that time in Rome, and no doubt even those believers who had been gathered from among the Gentiles were altogether under the influence of the Jewish spirit. Pfeiderer (*Hibbert Lectures*, 139) thinks that the Epistle suggests that the relations between the Jewish and Gentile sections of the Church were strained, that the healthy development of the Church was thus placed in daily greater peril, and the more so as through the rapid growth of the Gentile

section, the Jewish, which had undoubtedly formed the principal element originally, had sunk into the position of a powerless minority.

Even this more moderate statement makes more of the strained relations between the two sections of the Church than the Epistle warrants. Certainly the majority was free from all Jewish Christian scrupulosity; for Paul feels himself impelled to exhort the Church to receive into fellowship the weakly scrupulous believer who observed days and refused to eat what had been offered to idols. And it is plain that had the Church as a whole been pronouncedly anti-Pauline, and tainted with Jewish-Christian views, Paul could not have spoken of its members as "full of all goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (xv. 15). There is no evidence in the Epistle that there was an anti-Pauline party in the Church. No doubt such a party might at any time arise, for Jewish Christianity was merely a one-sided exaggeration of a view of the Jew's relation to Christ, which must have inevitably suggested itself to every Jewish mind. And certainly this letter cuts the ground from the Jewish Christian position by proving that Jews and Gentiles alike are under sin, and alike must be saved by grace. But this is done without any polemical pushing of principles to their issues, or explicit assault upon the Jewish Christian position such as we find in the Epistle to the Galatians. The allusions to that type of Christianity are incidental, and are not the main object of the Epistle.

6. *Object of the Epistle.*—What, then, is the object of the letter which determines all its contents? In substance the letter is a justification of the Apostle's mission to the Gentiles; a justification first to his own mind, and secondly to all whom it may concern. He habitually considered himself "the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" (xv. 16); and among the Gentiles he made no distinctions, but recognised that he was bound to carry the Gospel to the highly civilised as well as to the rude and uneducated; or, as he himself puts it, he felt himself to be "debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise." Accordingly he longed to bring the Gospel into contact with civilisation in its highest form, with Roman society, for he was "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (i. 15, 16). But in proposing to do so he was conscious that he was taking a new step, that he had reached a crisis in his career, and was more distinctly than ever giving himself to the Gentiles. It was natural, therefore, that at this time he should review the situation, and should make clear to his own mind the relation of Jew to Gentile, and the relation of each to the Gospel. And

in this Epistle he explains his fundamental thoughts on these subjects.

He explains why he considers the Gospel needful, what the Gospel is, and in what consists its sufficiency for Jew and Gentile alike. He does so with less reference to the actual condition of the Church he writes to than is usually found in his Epistles; but he cannot write in oblivion of the fact so forcibly impressed on his own experience that in the Christian Church two great classes have to be considered, Jew and Gentile. His object in writing is, as he explicitly declares (xv. 15, 16), to put his correspondents in mind that he was to be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles; and his letter accordingly is an exposition of the applicability of the Gospel to the Gentiles. And this he effects, in great measure, by showing that the fact of the Jews having the law does not put them on a different platform from the Gentiles; that such Jews as had been saved before Christ came or as were saved now, were saved on terms available for Gentiles. In short, there is throughout the Epistle constant reference to the law, the prejudices, the destiny of the Jews, to illustrate the main purpose of the writer and throw light on the salvability of the Gentiles.

7. *Analysis of Contents.*—This will more clearly appear if we briefly analyse the contents of the Epistle. He means, he says, to preach the Gospel at Rome, because he believes that it is “the power of God unto salvation,” not to one race only, but “to every one that believeth”; to the Jew first, no doubt, in the order of God’s providence, “but also to the Greek” (i. 16). The Gospel, that is, is the medium through which God’s power to lift men out of moral evil and bring them into perfect correspondence with His own righteousness is exercised. That this is God’s grand purpose with men is evident from the results which attend unrighteousness—“the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (i. 18).

Of these results the inhabitants of Rome had ample experience (i. 21—32). But the frightful wickedness of the Gentiles and the manifest punishment which followed were no reasons for the Jewish contempt and hopelessness. Rather did the scorn with which the Jew looked on the immoral and ignorant Gentile reflect on his own sin against the light of the law. If the Gentile who knew not the law was, by his immorality, beyond God’s mercy, equally or more so was the Jew who knew the law, and yet did not observe it. Not the having the law but the keeping it was righteousness; not the circumcision of the flesh but of the spirit saves (ii. *passim*). If so, is the Jew righteous and the Gentile condemned? Alas! the law itself says, “There is none

righteous, no, not one"; and what it says it of course says to them who are under the law; to Jews, not to Gentiles. It means, "There is no Jew righteous, no, not one" (iii. 19). If, then, men are to be justified, it must be not by the Jewish law but by faith; by that which the Gentile as well as the Jew may have. Jew and Gentile alike must put away boasting, and on an equal footing of humility accept God's grace. Thus was even Abraham justified (iv.); righteousness was imputed to him without works meriting it and without circumcision. As he believed God, and trusted that God would bless him, and did not think of earning the blessing God promised of His own grace, so must we accept the peace offered us in Christ. For it is in Christ God's love is now shown, and in Christ His righteousness is now revealed (v.). Neither will our abandonment of the idea that we must earn the blessedness God gives lead us to undervalue holiness and live in sin. On the contrary, the acceptance of Christ and the life that is in Christ involves renunciation of sin and consecration of the whole self to God. The spirit of life which is in Christ makes men truly sons of God, and carries them on to perfect righteousness and lasting glory (vi.—viii.).

But the very triumph Paul feels in so saving a Gospel suggests to him the condition of his unbelieving fellow-countrymen, and in chapters ix., x., and xi. he discloses his thoughts regarding their future. His turning to the Gentiles was not agreeable to his feelings. Not only so, he was perplexed in his mind by the apparent futility of the Gospel among the very people who, in so many respects, were most carefully prepared to receive it. The Jews seemed to have been intended to be specially Christ's people, but Christ's coming had really alienated and ruined them. This unexpected result demanded a philosophy of history or scheme of providence which might satisfactorily account for it. Wherever Paul went he found that the prepared Jews did not accept the Messiah as readily as the Gentiles did. What did this mean? Have the Jews no advantage?

Many of Paul's enemies might think that he, the universalist who broke down all walls of partition, would say the advantage was small. Many of the Gentiles might suppose that he who had been insulted, beaten, outraged by the Jews would be careless of their fate. But, on the contrary, his heart bleeds for them and yearns over them. He would accept any fate for himself, if thereby he could alter the fate they had brought on themselves by their unbelief. He will not suffer the Gentiles to suppose that, because he turns to them, the Jews are for ever cast off by God. He is convinced their rejection is but for a time, and that their acceptance of Christ will be as a new birth to the world.

Their unbelief has sent Paul to the Gentiles ; if, then, “the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead ?” (xi. 15). Then follows a full and beautiful exhibition of the duties and character resulting from this Gospel Paul preaches, and the Epistle concludes with the usual salutations.

8. *Authenticity and Integrity.*—The authenticity of this Epistle is not doubted by any, but suspicions have been cast on its integrity. It has been thought strange that St. Paul should send salutations to so many people in a Church he had never visited ; strange, also, that so many of these salutations should be addressed to persons whose names are associated rather with Ephesus than with Rome. The repeated terminations to the Epistle at xv. 33, xvi. 20, 24, 27, have also been a puzzle. Even conservative critics have suggested that perhaps the letter was issued in more forms than one, and, being despatched to different Churches, copies might exist with different salutations and different conclusions.

FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
CORINTHIANS.

1. *Corinth*.—At the date of St. Paul's visit to Corinth it was the chief city of the Roman province of Achaia and the headquarters of the Proconsul. Its natural situation on the Isthmus, commanding on the eastern side the port of Cenchrea, and on the western that of Lechæum, had from the earliest times given it importance. Rather than encounter the risks of doubling Cape Malea "of bad fame," the seamen bringing goods from Asia to Italy preferred to unlade at the one port and relade at the other. So commonly was this done that arrangements were made for conveying the smaller ships themselves across the Isthmus, and shortly after the Apostle's visit the Emperor Nero cut the first turf of a proposed, but never finished, canal. To one approaching the Isthmus from either sea, the most conspicuous object was an abrupt and massive rock, nearly two thousand feet high, known as the Acrocorinthus. On a slightly elevated platform at the northern base of this citadel the city of Corinth was built.

But in the year 146 b.c. the ancient city was completely destroyed by the Roman general Mummius. For a century it lay demolished and deserted; but in the year 44 b.c. Julius Cæsar rebuilt and repeopled it, chiefly with Roman veterans and freedmen. Hence, many of the Corinthians mentioned by St. Paul bear names which indicate their Roman or servile origin, Quartus, Crispus, Gaius, Justus, Fortunatus, Achaicus. The city soon regained its former size and opulence, and also, unfortunately, its old reputation for profligacy. As Renan says, "the whole city was like a vast pandemonium, where the numerous strangers, the sailors particularly, resorted to spend their wealth foolishly." "To live as they do at Corinth" was, in St. Paul's time, the equivalent for living in luxury and licentiousness. It

was a city, too, in which Roman brutality and Oriental vice were not the only obstacles to Christianity. Greek factiousness and vanity, the sophistries of a shallow philosophy and the verbal victories of the demagogue, found for themselves a congenial soil in this mixed population. No city could give a fuller representation of the various weaknesses and vices of the ancient world, or seem a less promising field for the Gospel.

2. *Condition of the Church.*—How the Apostle of the Gentiles reached this focus of heathenism, how he founded a Christian Church, and how he defeated the machinations of the unbelieving Jews may be read in the Book of Acts, c. xviii. For eighteen months he remained in Corinth, partly, no doubt, induced by his success, partly by perception of the dangers ahead. At length, in the spring of the year 54 A.D., he leaves to be present at Pentecost in Jerusalem. After celebrating the feast he proceeds to Antioch, where he spends "some time," and after visiting Phrygia, Galatia, and other parts of Asia Minor, he reaches Ephesus either late in 54 or early in 55. Here he remains for about three years. Meanwhile, Apollos, who had made a marked impression in Ephesus, had gone to Achaia, and was no doubt helpful in restraining the evil tendencies of the Corinthian Church.

But in spite of all Christian effort the pressure of their heathen surroundings was too much for many of the Corinthian converts, and in 1 Cor. v. 9, 10, there is trace of a letter previously written to them by St. Paul, in which he had prohibited intercourse with fornicators, idolaters, covetous persons, and extortioners. Either wilfully or ignorantly misunderstanding him, they had replied that society in Corinth was wholly composed of such persons, and that compliance with his prohibition involved their going out of the world altogether. With this reply they laid before him a number of other difficulties (1 Cor. vii. 1; viii. 1; xii. 1, &c.). This letter from Corinth, together with the oral information he had received from members of Chloe's household, who had come to Ephesus, calls forth the first extant Epistle to the Corinthians.

3. *The Questions before the Apostle.*—The sad state of matters in the Church of Corinth, which is disclosed in this Epistle, shows us the kind of work required of one who in those days had the care of all the Churches. A host of difficult questions poured in upon him, questions regarding the very foundations of the faith, questions of morality and of casuistry, questions regarding public worship and social intercourse. Are we to dine with our heathen relatives? May we intermarry with them; or, if already married, are we to divorce our heathen partners; or may we

marry at all? Can slaves continue in the service of heathen masters? Can we restrain those who speak with tongues and are inspired?

But the mere difficulty of answering such questions was not that which filled Paul's eyes with tears as he answered their inquiries (2 Cor. ii. 4). It was the self-satisfied vanity that shone through even their request for advice (viii. 1), the evidence which some of their questions bore to the presence of a restless Greek intellectualism (xv. 35) and litigiousness (vi. 1—11), and of a potent residuum of Corinthian sensuality (vi. 16; x. 8; xi. 21), and above all, the tidings that had reached him of their party-spirit and of their scandalizing even the heathen by retaining in their communion a man who had married his step-mother (v. 2); it was this which excited in Paul's mind the deepest misgivings regarding the future of the Church.

The calmness and good temper with which he exposes the sin of getting drunk at the Lord's table or the scandalous disorder of their meetings for worship are not less remarkable than the sagacity with which he pronounces upon their various difficulties, and the ease, promptitude, and finality with which he sets them free from errors of opinion. We can never be sufficiently thankful that in that primitive age, when the Christian Church was "pawning to get free" from its natal clay of heathenism, it found one strong hand to help it, one sane and balanced judgment to mark out boldly and clearly the boundaries of right and wrong.

4. *Scope of the First Epistle.*—No analysis of this Epistle need be given, for its divisions are well marked. It consists of lucid judgments on a series of points, and not of one prolonged argument whose steps might call for explanation. After the usual introduction the writer rebukes their divisions and party-spirit (i. 10—iv. 21); in chapters v. and vi. he alludes to the scandals which had arisen by unlawful alliances and by a readiness to carry brethren before heathen tribunals; he then discusses the questions relating to marriage in vii., and in viii., ix., and x. the difficulties arising in connection with idol-sacrifices. The abuses which had crept into their meetings for worship, the unveiling of women, and the irregularities in administering the Lord's Supper, are rebuked and corrected in c. xi. This leads to a full explanation of the principles of Christian fellowship, of the relative value of the diverse gifts possessed by the various members of the body of Christ, and of the order which should be observed in the use of these gifts (xii., xiii., xiv.). Then follows the argument in favour of the resurrection (xv.), and the Epistle closes with the usual personal explanations and greetings.

5. *Parties in the Church.*—The mention of four parties in the Church of Corinth has been supposed to give countenance to the Tübingen idea that between Paul and the original Apostles there existed an irreconcilable difference in doctrine and in feeling. Closer examination of the facts dispels this idea. That Paul and Apollos were friendly, and that Paul was anxious that Apollos should renew his labours in Corinth, is obvious from xvi. 12 of this Epistle. It is clear, therefore, that there could be no material difference between the Gospel preached by the one and that preached by the other; and the assumption by members of the Corinthian Church of the name of Paul or Apollos as their leader could mean no more than that some admired the one more than the other. Apollos probably presented the Gospel in a more philosophic garb and with more of the graces of the orator. The manner in which St. Paul speaks of the parties in the Church puts it beyond question that it was the unseemliness of personal preferences, and not the danger of heretical teaching he had in view.

The same remarks apply to the party who said, “We are of Cephas.” But who were those who said, “We are of Christ”? They could only be persons who plumed themselves on having heard Christ Himself, and who piqued themselves on depending on no Apostle or teacher. Of these men the Apostle speaks, in the Second Epistle, in language of extreme severity. He ironically calls them “overmuch Apostles” (xi. 5; xii. 11), and even denounces them as “false Apostles” (xi. 13). From his description of them it may be gathered that they were native Jews who came to Corinth with letters of recommendation, and sought to destroy the influence of St. Paul and substantiate their own claims to authority.

6. *Date of the First Epistle.*—It would appear from xvi. 8, “I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost,” that St. Paul wrote this First Epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus, and early in the year. It is not absolutely certain what year this was. We know that he left Ephesus shortly after despatching the letter, and worked his way through Macedonia to Corinth, where he wintered. Leaving Corinth in early spring he made his way to Jerusalem, where he was arrested, and after being confined two years in Cæsarea, he was sent to Rome. This relegation of the Apostle to the imperial tribunal occurred shortly after Felix had been recalled and had been replaced by Festus. But whether this event belongs to the year 60 or 61 is uncertain. If Felix was recalled in 60 A.D., then 1 Corinthians was written in the spring of 57; if in 61 A.D., then the Epistle belongs to the spring of 58.

7. *Date of the Second Epistle.*—The relative, though not the absolute date of 2 Corinthians, is also easily fixed from the various allusions to the writer's movements which it contains. By these allusions (i. 8—10; ii. 12, 13; vii. 6) we can trace St. Paul's movements and feelings as he passed through Asia Minor from Ephesus to Troas, and thence to Macedonia, where at length Titus joined him with reassuring news from Corinth. It was on receipt of this news he penned the Second Epistle, so that it is separated from the First by only a few months, and was sent from Macedonia while Paul was on his way to Corinth.

8. *Its Purpose.*—The object of the letter was chiefly to express his satisfaction at the good results of his former letter and of the mission of Titus. He first of all endeavours to remove any soreness which might be lingering in the minds of the Corinthians owing to his visiting Macedonia before coming to Corinth. He had originally intended to pass through Corinth on his way to Macedonia (i. 16), and had abandoned this plan not because of mere fickleness, or because it now suited him better to adopt another, but because he could not bear to come among them merely to rebuke and find fault (i. 17; ii. 13). While waiting for such tidings from Corinth as would enable him to visit them in friendliness and with approval he preaches the Gospel as he has opportunity, and the mention of this leads him to indulge in a glowing eulogy of the Gospel and its power (ii. 14; vi. 10). At this point in the Epistle (vi. 11) he reverts to the condition of the Corinthian Church, and urges the necessity of Christians living separate from scandalous sinners. This he believes the Corinthians were now endeavouring to do; so Titus has told him; and therefore he does not regret having pained them by warnings and rebukes which have borne this good fruit (vii.). He is also happy to acknowledge their charity in contributing to the support of the poor of Jerusalem (viii., ix.). But this grateful and encouraging tone is changed when in the tenth chapter he proceeds to expose those who had come among them professing to have their Gospel from Christ Himself, and striving to undermine the authority of St. Paul. In a singularly powerful and eloquent passage he disposes of their pretensions, and explains on what his own authority rests (x., xi., xii.). These things, he concludes by saying, he prefers to write, that when he comes he may have nothing disagreeable to say.

These two Epistles are accepted as authentic by even the most hostile critics.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
GALATIANS.

1. *Who were the Galatians?*—This Epistle is addressed to “the Churches of Galatia” (i. 2). But where these Churches were situated, and when founded, it is impossible to determine with precision. This difficulty arises from the circumstance that the name *Galatia* may either be used ethnologically of the region inhabited by the Celtic tribes known as Galatian, or politically of the Roman province which included Lyceaonia, Isauria, and parts of Phrygia and Pisidia. It would appear, however, from the book of Acts (xiii. 14; xiv. 6; xvi. 6), that Luke, and probably, therefore, Paul, used these names of countries in their geographical and not in their political sense. Lystra and Derbe are spoken of as cities of Lyceaonia, not of Galatia; Antioch is described as belonging to Pisidia; and Phrygia and Galatia are spoken of as distinct regions. The probability therefore is that by Galatia is meant the region lying to the north-east of Phrygia, and crossed by the river Halys. It was here that the descendants of the Celtic tribes who had invaded the country in the third century b.c. were to be found. The three principal tribes, the Trocmi, the Tolistobogii, the Tectosages, had each a chief town, named respectively Tavium, Pessinus, and Aneyra, but in which of these cities, if in any of them, the Apostle had founded a Church, we do not know.

Confirmation of the view that the Churches of Galatia had at least a mixture of Celtic blood is found in the character of their members as revealed by this Epistle. Ancient writers remarked upon the impressible, eager, and fickle disposition of the Celts; upon their vanity, quarrelsomeness, and sensuality. Michelet describes his own people as true children of the Gael, prompt to learn, prompt to despise, and greedy of new things; light, excitable, sensual. This character appears in the persons addressed in this Epistle. They had readily received the Gospel, but as readily relinquished it. They were sensual (vi. 8), vain (v. 26), quarrelsome (v. 15).

2. *The Occasion of the Epistle.*—If “the Churches of Galatia” had meant the Churches in the Roman province of Galatia, then we should have a full account of their foundation, for no part of Luke’s narrative is more complete and distinct than that which tells of the Apostle’s preaching in Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra. But, so far as can be gathered from Acts, in Galatia proper Paul apparently did not even mean to preach, but while passing through the country on his way to Troas or Bithynia he fell ill, and was compelled to interrupt his journey (Gal. iv. 13). Seizing the opportunity afforded by this enforced delay, he preached the Gospel and found extraordinary acceptance (iv. 14, 15). The Galatians were unconscious of, or seemed to overlook anything insignificant or repulsive in Paul’s appearance, and showed him the utmost attention.

At first the new converts “ran well,” but when Paul visited them about two years after, on his way from Jerusalem to Ephesus, he perceived symptoms of defection and weariness in well-doing which caused him anxiety. Judaizing teachers had found access to these young Gentile communities, and had to some extent persuaded them that only by passing through Judaism could any one become a Christian. The law of Moses, the rite of circumcision, the observance of Jewish fast days were pressed upon them, and so skilfully that many were wavering. Paul’s visit was opportune, and no doubt helpful in checking defection from the pure faith he had taught. He “strengthened all the disciples” (Acts xviii. 23). But his departure was the signal for further relapse. Shortly after his arrival in Ephesus such accounts of the success of the Judaizers reached him as impelled him to write this Epistle.

3. *Nature of the Controversy.*—St. Paul himself does not seem to have known who these teachers were. “Who hath bewitched you?” he says (iii. 1). It is not likely, therefore, that they used the name of any of the older Apostles. And no special reason for their coming to Galatia need be sought; for the question of the relation of Gentile Christians to the Mosaic law was sure, sooner or later, to emerge in every Church in which there were any Jewish Christians. The prompt and easy solution of the difficulty, or its elevation into a matter of serious dissension and irreconcilable party strife, depended of course on how it was met and dealt with. The Judaizers who maintained that to become a Christian a man must first become a Jew, had much to say for themselves. The law was a divine institution and could not be abrogated or neglected. The promises were given solely to the Jews, to Abraham and his seed. The Messiah was the Messiah of the Jews. Jesus Himself was circumcised and kept the whole law; the original Apostles did the same.

Besides, if the Gentile converts were not enjoined to keep the law, how were they to escape from the immoralities in which they had been brought up? Such arguments were specious; but had they prevailed, Christianity would have dwindled into a short-lived Jewish sect. In the case of the Galatians other arguments had been added to these. Paul's authority was questioned. He had not been of the original twelve. Moreover, it was insinuated that he could not object on principle to circumcision, because when it suited him he enjoined it, as in the case of Timothy. If, therefore, he had not enjoined it on the Galatians, it was through a desire to please men and make the reception of the gospel easier to them.

4. *Paul's Doctrinal Position.*—The occasion, then, was of a kind to call out the full strength of the Apostle of the Gentiles. And never with as few words was a great controversy disposed of. In the first two chapters he disposes of the insinuations against his authority as an Apostle; in the next two he shows the relation of the law to Christ, or of Judaism to Christianity; in the last two he refutes the allegation that liberty and licence are the same. To the disparagement of his Apostolic authority he gives a threefold reply. First, declaring himself to be an Apostle, "not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father"; he proves from his movements after his conversion to Christianity that it was impossible he should have received his knowledge of the Gospel from men. In point of fact he had gone at first into Arabia, and when at length he did go to Jerusalem he saw only Peter (i.). Second, it was only after many years of preaching that at length he went to confer with the original Apostles at Jerusalem, and even then, so far from receiving any additional light from them, they approved of his teaching, gave him the right hand of fellowship, and encouraged him in his work (ii. 1—10). Third, when Peter himself came to Antioch he ate with the uncircumcised Gentiles, which no strict Jew would have done. In Paul's opinion Peter thus surrendered the whole Judaizing position, for, as he says, if one who was himself a Jew neglected the strictest Jewish regulations, how could he in consistency command Gentiles to observe them? Paul convinced Peter of this, and thus, at one and the same time, illustrated his own authority and made good his doctrinal position (ii. 11—21).

The dogmatic significance of the demand that the Gentiles should keep the whole law is next examined by Paul. And here he first appeals to their own experience. They had received the Spirit; that is, they had in themselves the earnest of salvation. Had this great possession become theirs by the observance of the law? They knew it was not so, but "by the hearing of

faith" (iii. 1—5). It was so even in the case of Abraham, the typical, justified man. Whatever blessing he had he received by faith (iii. 6—9). The law indeed has power only to curse, and from this curse Christ came to redeem us (iii. 10—14). Besides, long before the law was heard of, the promise had been given to Abraham, and could not be made of none effect by any institution which succeeded it. The promise was first and held the field. Not that the law was useless; far from it. The law was added to show men what sin and righteousness are, and to stimulate men to long for the fulfilment of the promise, the coming of the Spirit. The law thus discharged the function of the slave who took the boys to school, or of the guardian who took charge of persons under age; but when the fulness of time comes the guardian is no more needed, the full-grown son receives the spirit of his Father and needs no outward control. This is what has happened in Christ (iii. 15; iv. 7). But the Galatians had persisted in carrying their childish customs into their mature years. Lastly, from the law itself Paul convinces them that there is a better thing, even freedom. This he does by using as an allegory the story of Ishmael and Isaac (iv. 21—31).

In the third division of the Epistle (v.) he proceeds to vindicate Christian freedom against all aspersions; first of all exhorting them to stand fast in their liberty, and not to put themselves under bondage to minute observances (v. 1—12), and then warning them against using this liberty as an occasion to the flesh (v. 13; vi. 10). In a brief conclusion, written with his own hand in the large letters (vi. 11) that distinguished his writing from the more clerkly writing of his amanuensis, he contrasts his own affectionate attitude towards them with the selfish aims of the Judaizers.

5. *Date of the Epistle.*—Owing to the absence from this Epistle of allusions to the writer's circumstances, and to those who were with him, it is not easy to fix its date. In the address he unites with himself "all the brethren who are with me" (i. 2), but names none. The stress laid upon the suddenness of the Galatian declension—"I marvel that ye are *so soon* removed from him that called you" (i. 6)—has inclined some to place the letter as early as possible in the Apostle's Ephesian residence. It has also been argued from 1 Cor. xvi. 1, that before these words were written, that is before the last year of the writer's residence in Ephesus, he was again on good terms with the Churches of Galatia. On the other hand it may very reasonably be argued that if the Epistles to the Corinthians were written after that to the Galatians, there would be discernible deeper traces of the conflict with Judaizing teachers.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
EPHESIANS.

1. *The Apostle's Visits to Ephesus*—On Paul's first visit to Ephesus (Acts xviii. 19) he was exceptionally well received by the Jews, who, before they allowed him to depart, extracted from him a promise that he would return. Before he was able to fulfil this promise the impression he had made on the Ephesian Jews was greatly deepened by the eloquence of Apollos (Acts xviii. 24—28). So promising a field was thus opened to Paul that when he returned to Ephesus he was induced to remain there for nearly three years. His very success, however, roused the hostility of the craftsmen, whose livelihood seemed to be endangered by the secession of Diana's worshippers. It was still perilous for him to visit Ephesus the year following (Acts xx. 16), but we gather from 1 Tim. i. 3, that he did again visit this Church. Next to Rome itself Ephesus was the most important city visited by Paul. Its position as a commercial and industrial centre had attracted to it large numbers of Jews, while its political and religious importance secured that what was taught in Ephesus should be heard throughout the whole province (Acts xix. 10). The whole narrative in the Book of Acts indicates that the Gospel was widely received both by the Jews and Greeks of Ephesus, and that the connection of Paul with the Christians there was unusually intimate.

2. *Peculiar Character of the Epistle*.—But turning to the Epistle which we know as “the Epistle to the Ephesians,” we find none of the friendly salutations common in the other Epistles, none of the fond naming of this friend and that in the Church addressed, no transmission of greetings from companions of the writer. And what is even more staggering, we find Paul speaking as if it was possible that the Ephesians were not aware of the

character and contents of his preaching, or could only have become acquainted with it by report (Eph. iii. 2; iv. 21). Moreover, while in the Acts there is evidence that the Ephesian Church must have been largely composed of Jews, it is in this Epistle addressed as a Gentile Church (ii. 11, 19; iii. 1; iv. 17). But in point of fact the words of the inscription, "at Ephesus" (Eph. i. 1), are not read in our two oldest MSS., the Vatican and the Sinaitic. And there is no doubt that the early Christian writers had difficulties about the inscription. Basil tells us that the words cited were not in the oldest MSS. Origen certainly did not read them. Marcion called the Epistle, "the Epistle to the Laodiceans," and Tertullian's reply to him is unsatisfactory.

With these facts before us it is natural to suppose that as the letter left the hand of the writer it was without any particular address, and was intended to be read not only by the Church at Ephesus, but by other Churches of proconsular Asia in which he was not personally known. The letter was carried by Tychicus (Eph. vi. 21), who was also the bearer of the letter to the Colossians (Col. iv. 7), and whose commission probably extended to other Churches of the district. It is, indeed, quite possible that this "Epistle to the Ephesians" was the "Epistle from Laodicea," which the Apostle instructed the Colossians to read (Col. iv. 16). That Epistle cannot have been addressed particularly and exclusively to Laodicea, else Paul could not have sent his greetings to the members of the Laodicean Church through the Colossians as he did (Col. iv. 15). Had he been writing directly to the Laodicean Church he would certainly have sent greetings directly. The "Epistle from Laodicea" must therefore have been of a general character, such as that to the Ephesians, and there is no reason to believe it was not that letter itself.

If this is the right construction to put upon the incidental allusions found in these Epistles, then we conclude that Tychicus was entrusted with this "Epistle to the Ephesians," and was instructed to read it to the Churches he visited. These Churches of proconsular Asia had not been founded by Paul himself, and were considered by him as essentially Gentile-Christian, and are so addressed. When his letters were collected this circular letter to the Churches of Asia would naturally be inscribed with the name of the metropolis and mother church, and be subsequently known as the Epistle to the Ephesians.

3. *Its Theme and Purpose.*—The contents of the Epistle quite bear out this idea of its destination. For a circular letter no subject could be more appropriate than the unity of the Church. Unity is the key to this Epistle—the unity of the Church with God, the unity of the two great sections of the Church—the

Jewish and the Gentile; the unity of the individual members with one another in the one body of the Church Catholic. "In Christ all things, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, are gathered together in one" (i. 10). This is God's eternal purpose, hid from former ages (iii. 5), but now made known (iii. 5, 9). To reconcile all things to God—that is the purpose which through all the ages has been running on to fulfilment. It is in Christ this purpose is fulfilled, for as in the Epistle to the Colossians Paul had taught that "in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," so in this Epistle he teaches that as Christ is the fulness and as it were body of God, so is the Church "Christ's body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Union with God is not mechanical in the case of men; they are brought into true fellowship with God, being "chosen in Christ *to be holy*" (i. 4). In reconciling Jew and Gentile alike to God, Christ has reconciled them to one another, "making of twain *one* new man" (ii. 15), and giving "both access by *one* Spirit unto the Father" (ii. 18). In order to come into this true reconciliation with God, and be "filled with all the fulness of God" (iii. 19), Christ must dwell in the heart by faith till the sovereignty and dominion of His love over all things be in some measure understood (iii. 17—20). As soon as churches and members of churches recognise that "there is one body and one Spirit, even as they are called in one hope of their calling, one Lord, one faith," &c. (iv. 4—6), they are ashamed of bitterness, wrangling, fraud, and feel themselves bound to promote the good of the whole body by each performing his own function.

The practical injunctions into which these doctrinal statements run are ruled by two ideas. The idea of unity excludes lying, "Speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another" (iv. 25). Anger, stealing, foul conversation are also excluded by the law that binds us to do and to say what may minister to those about us (iv. 29). The idea that the radical relationships of life are pure also plays its part. In opposition to the Gnostic asceticism, which taught that these relationships must be abandoned if men would be holy, Paul shows that in these relationships the highest Christian grace, the very love which Christ bore to men, is to be cultivated.

4. *Conjecture as to its Occasion.*—Weiss is of opinion that the Epistle had a more definite and urgent historical occasion than the mere accident of the journey of Tychicus to Colossæ. He thinks the contents of the Epistle can only be accounted for if we suppose that Paul saw in the Churches of Asia symptoms of the same dangers which had grown to such magnitude in

Galatia. "The Phrygian disturbances had again reminded the Apostle how readily the old antagonism which he had overcome in his legally-minded Pharasaic opponents might spring up again in a new form; hence it occurred to him to show that it might be got rid of by admitting the Gentiles to the possession of the salvation and the promises of free Israel, and must necessarily be dissipated on the part of the Gentiles by the laying aside of all heathen practices, and the regulation of the whole moral life in a Christian spirit, which makes all legal or ascetic restrictions superfluous." That there were Jewish Christian Churches in Asia he considers is involved in the inscription of St. Peter's First Epistle, and the many reminiscences and echoes of that Epistle which occur in the Epistle to the Ephesians are accounted for on the supposition that the same Churches were in the writer's view. It must, however, be acknowledged that in the Epistle there is little evidence even of an embryonic hostility on the part of the Jewish Christians, whatever shyness on the part of the Gentile Christians may be discerned. [Material for a comparison of the Epistle to the Ephesians with 1 Peter will be found in Weiss's "Introduction to the New Testament," i. 355.]

5. *Its Similarity to "Colossians."*—Knowing as we do that the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians were dispatched, and therefore probably written, at the same time, we are not surprised to find that many of the thoughts and many of the phrases are the same in both. The writer is evidently moving in the same circle of ideas, the cosmic significance of the person and work of Christ, the purpose of God towards the world, and the arrangement in accordance with this purpose of the ages or dispensations in history. Paul in both Epistles calls attention to the fact that he had been entrusted with the ministry by a special dispensation of God's grace, that he might make known the mystery which in former ages had been hid (Eph. iii. 1—9; ep. Coloss. i. 23—27). In both Epistles the work of Christ is spoken of as a reconciling work (Eph. ii. 13—19; Col. i. 20). In both Christ is presented as embodying and making available for man the fulness of God (Eph. i. 23; Col. i. 19), and as the head of the body the Church (Eph. i. 22; iv. 15; Col. i. 18). The condition of men apart from Christ is described in similar terms in both Epistles (Eph. ii. 5; Col. ii. 13); the results of Christ's work are also similarly described (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14), and the transition from the natural to the Christian life is in both spoken of as a "putting off the old man" and putting on the new (Eph. iv. 22—24; Col. iii. 9, 10). The graces which the "new man" exhibits, and the conduct becoming his high calling, are

spoken of in almost identical language in the closing exhortations of both Epistles, although in the Ephesian letter there is richer development of domestic duties.

6. *Date and Circumstances of Composition.*—This similarity has excited much attention, and has, in the first place, invited the question, which of the two letters was first written? From the supposed mention of the Epistle to the Ephesians in Col. iv. 16, it has been concluded by many sound critics that it was the earlier of the two. But on the other hand it is urged that the occurrence of the expression “you also,” in Eph. vi. 21, is proof that this same recommendation of Tychicus had already been made to the Colossians (cp. Col. iv. 7, 8). “In any case it is most natural to suppose that the Epistle designed for concrete needs was written first, wider and freer expression being then given by the Apostle in a letter of more general character to the thoughts by which he was stirred.” The attempts which have been made to show the dependence either of *Ephesians* on *Colossians* (Hönig) or of *Colossians* on *Ephesians* (Mayerhoff) cannot be said to have been successful. Each of the Epistles is so freely written, and contains so much independent matter, and makes so different a use of ideas that are common to both, that all we can say is that they were written at the same time and under the influence of the same dominating thoughts.

Whether written before or after the sister Epistle to the Colossians, this letter was evidently written while Paul was a prisoner (see iii. 1; iv. 1; vi. 20). It has usually been supposed that it was during his Roman imprisonment these letters were penned, but recently there has been a considerable reaction in favour of the Cæsarean imprisonment. Between these competing claims it is not easy to decide, but on the whole the evidence is rather in favour of the later date, the Roman imprisonment. Baur, indeed, and his disciples persuade themselves that it must have been written much later than this or any point within the lifetime of Paul. References both to Gnosticism and Montanism are found in it. The latter phase of doctrine is detected in “the prominence given to the *πνεύμα* as the Montanist Paraclete of the gift of the Spirit, the union of Prophets with Apostles, the insistence on the holiness of the Church, and the division of its life into epochs, as well as the comparison of its relation to Christ with the marriage relation, and such like.

The proper aim of the Epistle seemed to be to bring the two parties in the Church, viz., the Jewish and Gentile Christians who were still separated, into the unity of the Catholic Church, which was attempted by an external synthesis of faith

and love, by modifying the Pauline thesis of justification, and making concessions to Judaism with its righteousness of works, and by an external union of Jews and Gentiles through the abolition of the law, *i.e.* essentially of circumcision.

7. *Authenticity.*—But considering the amount of attestation the Epistle receives from the sub-apostolic writers, it is impossible to doubt its authenticity. Clement of Rome (i. 46) seems to have it in his mind when he says, “Have we not one God, and one Christ, and one Spirit of grace poured out upon us, and one calling in Christ.” Ignatius, in his *Epistle to the Ephesians* (*circa* 110), mentions Paul’s Epistle to them, and imitates the introduction of the apostolic letter in his own. In chapters ix. and xv. he also makes use of the idea of a temple built of living stones as naturally suggests the similar language of Paul. Polycarp also quotes this Epistle; and it is included as Pauline in the Canons of the second century.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL, THE APOSTLE
TO THE
PHILIPPIANS.

1. *The Church at Philippi.*—Philippi was the most easterly city of Macedonia, and was therefore “the first” (Acts xvi. 12) at which Paul arrived in that province, on his first visit to Europe. It had originally been known as *Kρυπτίδες* (*Fountains*); but when Philip the Great enlarged and strengthened it, he named it after himself, Philippi. In history it became conspicuous as the scene of the overthrow of Brutus and Cassius, in commemoration of which event it was erected into a colony by Augustus. Its population accordingly must have been largely composed, in New Testament times, of the descendants of Roman veterans, using the Latin language and observing the Roman law. The Jews were apparently few, as they had no synagogue but only a place of prayer on the bank of the little stream, Gangites, which flowed past the town. The idea, therefore, that the Philippian Church was the subject of a Jewish Christian schism is untenable, although both in former times, and more recently by so able a critic as Holstein, this has been maintained. (See Schinz, “*Die Christliche Gemeinde zu Philippi*,” Zurich, 1833.)

It is evident, however, from iii. 2, *seqq.*, that the Philippian Church was exposed to the same dangers as other Churches from Jewish Christian teaching, although as yet this teaching had not deeply influenced many of its members. They are not addressed in this passage as the members of the Galatian Church were addressed. They are not admonished or rebuked as having already fallen away from Pauline teaching, but are warned against teachers whose influence was anti-Pauline. Neither is this warning the main theme of the letter, nor is it the object of the Apostle’s writing.

The occasion of the Epistle was the return of Epaphroditus to

Philippi. He had come to Rome as the bearer of a gift from the Apostle's friends in Philippi, and had thrown himself so sympathetically into the work of Christ in the metropolis, that he had contracted serious illness (ii. 30). On recovering and hearing how anxious his friends had been on his account, he naturally desired to return to Philippi, and Paul could not send him home without putting in his hands a written acknowledgment of the kindness he had received from the Philippians. He wished also to prepare the way for Timothy's visit (ii. 19), and to incite them to unity and joyfulness of spirit.

2. *Date and Place of Composition.*—The Epistle, then, bears on its face that it was written from Rome towards the close of Paul's imprisonment. Though still in bonds he was living in expectation of a speedy decision in his case. To himself personally it mattered little whether this decision should consign him to a martyr's death, or should set him free to face once more the toils and risks and contumely of an Apostle's life. But though on his own account he had much reason to long for emancipation from the privations and hardships of life, and for entrance into the joy of his Lord, he was quite willing to spend himself for others, and inclined to think that he was destined to be used still in Christ's cause on earth (i. 20—26). And he was reconciled not only to the termination of his imprisonment, whatever its issue might be, but he was now in a position to see how much the Gospel had been furthered by that very confinement which had threatened to obstruct his usefulness. The soldiers who guarded him could not but talk in the barracks of the Praetorian guard (i. 13) of the strange words that fell from his lips. The reality of his character and the truth of his teaching penetrated even into the household of Cæsar (iv. 22), and a gospel which might have been contemptuously ignored, had it been proclaimed in the Jewish quarter, was now the talk of Rome. Besides his pertinacity and joy in prosecuting still his Apostolic function gave new confidence to the followers of Christ in the metropolis (i. 14); and even those who grudged him his influence, were by their envy (i. 15) stirred to greater zeal in proclaiming the Gospel.

Paul tells them how his sufferings had thus tended to "the furtherance of the Gospel," that they may be encouraged to expect a similar result from their sufferings (i. 27—30). His imprisonment must not discompose them, nor are they in his absence to suffer their faith or their love to fail; but following their Lord in His humility, they are to accept a lowly place, and so work out their own salvation, depending not on the presence of an Apostle, but on a higher and stronger will (ii. 1—13). He

encourages them to this humble and joyful acceptance of their lot by telling him that he means to send Timothy to visit them, and hopes also to come himself. By this introduction he at last reaches the announcement of the return of Epaphroditus, which was the prime occasion of his writing.

3. *St. Paul's Doctrine*.—Although the object of the Epistle was not doctrinal, Paul never more clearly announced his Gospel than in the third chapter. If circumcision, Hebrew descent, legal blamelessness, formed a just claim to salvation, Paul had more to rely upon than the most convinced and zealous Judaizer. He was circumcised, of pure blood, and a rigid observer of the law. But though he once built his hope of God's favour on these things, and counted them over in his own mind as his spiritual gains, he now esteemed them not at all. He found them to be an actual hindrance, a loss, a minus quantity. He had to cast them away, to renounce all these claims, in order that he might win Christ. For a man who hopes to earn God's favour by his own righteousness has no need of Christ, and will not accept Him. But, says Paul, "I have suffered the loss of all things"—all, that is, on which he had founded the hope of God's favour—"and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him," &c. (iii. 8, 9). He saw how much purer, deeper, more efficient was the righteousness offered to him in Christ, and therefore in order to win it he rejected the other. To depend on both was impossible; they mutually exclude each other. Paul made his choice, threw away his former gains and so gained Christ. He saw that the favour of God, which he had been laboriously trying to secure by exact observance of the law, was already his by God's free gift. And he at the same time saw in the character of Christ that the righteousness of God was an absolute righteousness impossible for him to attain to by the law.

But while he abandoned his own righteousness as a ground of God's favour, he was far from abandoning the hope of holiness. On the contrary, his aim is not only to win Christ and be found in Him, but "to know Christ and the power of His resurrection," &c. (iii. 10). His final object being "to attain to the resurrection of the dead," to be conformed to Christ in spirit and in body (iii. 21), he finds in Christ new forces for the attainment of this object. He sees it attained in Christ, and this gives a definiteness and hopefulness to his aim which it had not before. And further, the intimate fellowship into which Christ has called him sustains, purifies, and strengthens him.

4. *Critical Objections*.—Schrader, who confined his criticism to the section iii. 1—iv. 9, was the first to throw doubt on the

authenticity of the Epistle. Baur conceived the Epistle to be conciliatory, and thus summarises his objections: "What appears suspicious to me in the Philippian Epistle may be reduced to the following three heads: 1. The appearance of Gnostic ideas in the passage ii. 6—9. 2. The want of anything distinctly Pauline. 3. The questionableness of some of the historical data." Schwegler, following Baur, finds an allusion to the two opposed Church parties in the two women of iv. 2, and Peter is the "yoke-fellow" appealed to by Paul. This criticism, however, has been repudiated by the more recent chiefs of the modern school, Hausrath, Holtzmann, Pfleiderer, and Hilgenfeld, who maintain the authenticity of the Epistle. Holstein has indeed reopened the question, instructively analysing the doctrine and the language of the Epistle, but his reasoning has not materially altered the attitude of criticism towards the authorship.

Readers of the Epistle will be disposed to agree with Weiss, who says, "It is in fact hard to understand how an Epistle containing so little that is properly doctrinal, and for the forging of which no object whatever can be conceived, should be spurious. The purely personal outpourings of the Apostle's heart respecting his feelings towards the Philippians, his frame of mind and prospects in captivity, would appear to be entirely at variance with such a view; especially does it seem inconceivable that a pseudonymous writer should have put into the mouth of the Apostle the expectation of being set free, although such expectation by the assumption of criticism was not actually fulfilled."

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
COLOSSIANS.

1. *The City of Colossæ.*—Colossæ, situated on the river Lycus, in south-western Phrygia, but within the Roman pro-consular province of Asia, had in earlier times been a large and populous city, but was considerably reduced at the date of this letter, possibly owing to the rivalry of its prosperous neighbours Laodicea and Hierapolis, which lay a few miles farther down the river. The only feature of the population which throws light on the Epistle is its very considerable Jewish ingredient. Two thousand Jewish families had been transplanted by Antiochus the Great, and had been settled in Lydia and Phrygia, and it is important to observe that those families had been brought from Babylonia and Mesopotamia. Other influences increased the Jewish population, until in Paul's time they formed a distinctly influential element in the towns of Phrygia.

2. *Occasion of the Epistle.*—Although the missionary journeys of Paul had more than once lain through Phrygia, it is clear that his route had always been east and north of the cities lying in the valley of the Lycus. In writing to the Colossians he classes them (ii. 1) with “those who have not seen [his] face in the flesh.” Apparently they had received the Gospel through Epaphras (i. 7), who was himself a Colossian (iv. 12), and probably was one of those who heard Paul preach at Ephesus, in the school of Tyrannus, and who spread the knowledge of the Lord Jesus among “all them which dwelt in Asia” (Acts xix. 10). Epaphras had joined Paul in Rome, and had given him a vivid idea of the progress and of the dangers of the Christian Churches in the valley of the Lycus (i. 8; iv. 12, 13). Teachers had appeared in Colossæ who were confusing the minds of the converts not yet “established in the faith.”

The precise doctrines and affinities of these teachers can be

gathered from the Epistle itself, in which Paul warns the Christians against them. That they were Jews is evident from their enjoining circumcision (ii. 11; iii. 11), and the observance of the Mosaic ordinances, sacred days and seasons, and so forth (ii. 14—22). So far they resembled the Judaisers who had marred Paul's work in Galatia and elsewhere. But with this Judaism the Colossian teachers mingled a "philosophy" (ii. 8), a "worshipping of angels" (ii. 18), and an ascetic "neglect of the body" (ii. 23) which were not characteristic of Judaising teachers. It would also appear that their philosophy or theosophy endangered the supremacy of Christ, probably by ascribing to angels the work of creation (i. 16), of giving and enforcing the law (ii. 15), and of mediating in redemption between God and man (ii. 18). And it is plain that all this was taught as a mystery or as esoteric doctrine imparted to the initiated alone, and under seal of secrecy (ii. 3; i. 27); and the emphasis laid on the non-exclusiveness of the Gospel i. 28, in the three times repeated "every."

3. *The Colossian Heresy.*—But no sooner are these characteristics of the Colossian heresy stated than it is obvious that point by point they coincide with Gnosticism. The very terms used by Paul are Gnostic terms.* Gnosticism, as the name itself implies, asserted the supremacy of knowledge (*gnosis*). Faith may suffice for the multitude, but the initiated, the select few, are saved by knowledge. The esoteric doctrine they imparted was a doctrine of creation devised to save God from the responsibility of being the author of evil. God, who is absolutely good, cannot by His immediate act have produced the world, for had He done so, it also must, like its author, be only good. Besides this moral difficulty there was ever clamouring for solution the metaphysical difficulty of connecting the Absolute God with the material world.

Both these difficulties the Gnostics claimed to solve by their theory of emanations. God expressed Himself by giving birth to a being worthy of Him; and that being again reproduced a third, and so on through successive emanations, each naturally in proportion to its distance from the source having a feebler divine ingredient, until contact with matter and the work of creation become possible. Between the supreme perfect God and the world there is thus interposed a graduated series of beings, which appear sometimes as personal, sometimes as impersonal, in the various Gnostic systems, and which are variously known as emanations, acons, or angels. Underlying this whole theory is the Oriental dualism which ascribes the origin of evil, not to the

* "Pleroma," ii. 9; "Principalities and Powers," &c., i. 6.

will of man but to matter. And as a necessary result of this tenet the Gnostics taught that redemption is to be achieved by asceticism.

4. *A Phase of Gnosticism.*—The form which Gnosticism took when combined with Jewish Christianity is distinctly seen in the teaching of Cerinthus, who flourished in the time of Trajan. He was a Jewish Christian, who adopted Gnostic views, and taught that the world was not made by the Supreme God, but by a power distinct from Him and ignorant of Him. Jesus, who was a mere man, received at His baptism the Christ, by whose inspiration He announced the unknown Father, the Supreme God. Toward the end of His ministry the Christ departed from Him, so that the mere man Jesus suffered, died, and rose again. This teaching brings out clearly the Ebionite tendency which naturally resulted from the Gnostic horror of matter; and that some similar tendency was exhibited by the Colossian errorists is evident from the emphatic manner in which Paul (i. 14, 19, 20, 22, &c.) links together the supremacy of Christ and His death, insisting that the same person who made all things suffered on the cross.

5. *Historical Objections to Genuineness.*—But the emergence of Gnostic ideas and terminology in a letter purporting to be written in the year 64 A.D., is declared to be sufficient proof that it is not what it claims to be. Thus Baur affirms that “we are here transported to a circle of ideas which belongs to a wholly different historical period, viz., to the period of Gnosticism,” that is, to the second century. It is true that, before the time of Cerinthus, we have no trustworthy record of any sect or teacher who combined fully-developed Gnostic ideas with Christian doctrine. But to argue that Gnosticism was not known in the Church until the beginning of the second century, and that this Epistle must therefore be referred to that period, is either to throw dust in the eyes or to betray ignorance of history. For the roots from which Gnosticism sprang can be traced not merely into the first century, but through the writings of Philo, the books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, back to the Persian speculations with which the Jews became familiar during the Captivity. And there is as much reason to refer Philo to the second century as to refer this Epistle to the period of fully-developed and explicitly-ennounced Gnosticism.

The fact is that, long before the Christian Church was founded, the thinkers of Asia were familiar with the ideas and speculations which were afterwards identified with Gnosticism; and if this great system was not earlier recognised as a Christian heresy, the probability is that the delay was caused, not by any lack of endeavour to combine Christianity and Gnosticism, but by the

strenuous opposition which the Apostles offered to the incipient tendencies towards this combination. It would be strange, indeed, if in an age when East and West were mingling, when amalgamations and combinations of every kind were attempted, when men seem to have come to distrust each separate philosophy, and to imagine that truth might be found by combining all, no attempt had been made to combine Christianity and Gnostic speculations. This Epistle is the most trustworthy evidence we have of any actual attempt of this kind, and in these Colossian teachers we see the spiritual progenitors of Cerinthus and the rest.

6. *Historical Place of the Colossian Heresy.*—Bishop Lightfoot has materially aided the endeavour to posit this Colossian heresy in its proper historical place by showing that it has its natural precursor in a well-known form of Judaism, which existed in the time of our Lord and His Apostles. He has shown that Essenism was Gnostic Judaism, and that this type of Jewish thought had established itself in Phrygia and Asia in the Apostolic Age. The Essenes represented, among the Jews, legalism, mysticism, and asceticism. They were scrupulous in their observance of the Mosaic law, though they looked with horror on bloody sacrifices; abstained, as it would seem, from eating flesh and drinking wine, and discountenanced marriage. It is easy to recognise the principle which lay at the root of this asceticism—the principle that matter is evil, and that to be delivered from sin man must, as far as possible, be emancipated from all dependence on matter. They betrayed their genealogical connection with Persian speculation by their worship of the sun and their doctrine of angels.

What that doctrine precisely was it is impossible to say, for the initiated was sworn “to conceal nothing from the members of the sect, and to report nothing concerning them to others . . . not to communicate any of their doctrines to any one otherwise than as he himself had received them . . . and to guard carefully the names of the angels.” The Essenes would thus seem to have possessed three of the characteristic notes of Gnosticism: “This Jewish sect exhibits the same exclusiveness in the communication of its doctrines. Its theological speculations take the same direction, dwelling on the mysteries of creation, regarding matter as the abode of evil, and postulating certain intermediate spiritual agencies as necessary links of communication between heaven and earth. And, lastly, its speculative opinions involve the same ethical conclusions, and lead in like manner to a rigid asceticism.” If, then, Essenism came in contact with Christianity and sought to form an alliance with it, there would result a conglomerate distinguishable by the very features of this Colossian heresy.

7. *Attitude of the Apostle.*—By these explanations not only is the genuineness of the Epistle established, but the point and power of its statements are brought clearly out. Paul does not aim at exploding the incipient heresy by argument. He contents himself with showing that all that was advantageous or attractive in the new doctrine existed already in Christ, and existed in Him, not in appearance, but in truth. To the attractiveness of being initiated into mysteries and esoteric doctrines to which none but the select few were admitted, he opposes his ministry of a Gospel free from all intellectual exclusiveness, which he preaches to “every creature” (i. 23), “warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (i. 28). The mere statement of this true perfecting of every man by the revelation of the mystery of Christ should be enough to make every sound-hearted man ashamed of being led away by a promised “perfection,” accomplished in a few by initiation into mysterious speculative theories. Similarly, over against the theory of intermediate beings saving God from direct contact with matter, Paul enunciates the true deity of Christ, and affirms that “by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth,” and that so far from matter being evil “all things were created . . . for Him” (i. 16).

No language could more firmly and explicitly affirm the proper divinity of Christ, or dispel the growing tendency to an Ebionitism, which might seem to save the Divine from coming into ignominious contact with matter, and even with death. The Christ whom Paul preached was not one emanation to be found at some point of the graduated descent from God to the last developed æon, but was Himself divine; “it pleased the Father that in Him should all the *pleroma* dwell,” the totality, or fulness of the Godhead, so that in Him all Divine attributes were to be found (i. 19; ii. 9). There was, therefore, no need of any wisdom or help which could not be found in Christ (ii. 3, 10). To worship angels and seek their help (ii. 18) may seem humility, but it is gratuitous and futile, for “ye are complete in Christ, who is the head of all principality and power” (ii. 10). Hold the head and you are saved; and refrain from all speculations which merely puff you up with a sense of fancied superiority (ii. 18).

The practical results of this incipient Gnosticism are exposed in the same manner, by exhibiting in contrast the greater efficacy of the purely Christian teaching. The rules of an ascetic avoidance of material things, “Touch not, taste not, handle not,” have a show of humility, but “are of no value against the indul-

gence of the flesh" (ii. 23). The true deliverance from carnality and earthliness is to be found in fellowship with Christ, in so truly believing and in loving Him that our affections are carried with Him to things above (iii. 1—5).

8. *Authenticity.*—The authenticity of the Epistle is externally attested by echoes in Barnabas, Clement, and Ignatius; by quotations in Justin Martyr, and by its reception into the canons of the first century. Mayerhoff was the first to throw suspicion upon it by exhibiting its resemblances to the Epistle to the Ephesians. Renan argues strongly for its genuineness, and among other grounds urges that if Ephesians was an imitation of it this implies that the imitator accepted Colossians as Pauline. Hilgenfeld holds with Baur, that "the Colossian letter has to do with an already fully developed Gnosticism, and this carries us not merely beyond Paul's lifetime, but beyond the first century." It is, however, impossible to imagine a letter such as this to have been written in presence of the fully developed systems. Opposition to these systems would have been more detailed and pronounced.

The difficulties which have been found in the style of the letter are explained by Paul's want of familiarity with this novel teaching. He was on ground he had not traversed before, using the suggestions of heresy to elucidate new aspects of Christ and His Gospel. The easy and natural manner in which this letter links itself to the Epistle to Philemon (cp. iv. 9—14, with Phil. 23, 24; iv. 17, with Phil. 2) is, as Renan shows, strong proof of authenticity. It may be added that the descriptions given of those who send salutations correspond with the fact that Paul and his constant companions had not been at Colossæ. Baur's idea, that Luke and Mark are brought together with "reconciling" intention is too ridiculous.

The mention of "the Epistle from Laodicea" (iv. 16) has given rise to a number of theories, which are classified and examined by Lightfoot. His own opinion is that the Epistle here referred to was that to the Ephesians, which was intended as a circular letter, to be read first by the Ephesians, then by the Laodiceans, and then by the Colossians. The spurious Laodicean Epistle is given by Lightfoot. It is a mere cento of phrases and clauses from the Pauline letters, and is entirely worthless.

FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

1. *Thessalonica.*—At the date of Paul's visit to Thessalonica, it was a city of some importance both commercially and politically. Lying, as it does, at the head of the Thermaic gulf, with the open sea in front and a rich country behind, it could scarcely fail to become a prosperous seat of commerce, and as it was also very capable of defence, Cassander rebuilt and enlarged it, and gave it the name of his wife Thessalonica, a sister of Alexander the Great. When it passed into the hands of the Romans its importance was still recognised, and it became the chief city of Macedonia Secunda, and ultimately the metropolis of the whole of that province. At the time of Paul's visit it was in the enjoyment of the rights of a free city, electing its own *politarchs*, although subject to the Roman proconsul.

Thessalonica was therefore a city in which the Apostle might expect to find a centre from which the Gospel might be disseminated both inland and seaward. Besides, unlike Philippi, it contained a synagogue to which his Jewish birth would give him entrance, and in which his message would at least be listened to with intelligence. It happened also that his own trade, the manufacture and preparation of goat's-hair cloth, was one of the staples of Thessalonica, as it still is of its modern representative Saloniki. For three Sabbaths Paul was allowed to address the Jews in the Synagogue (Acts xvii. 2), with the result that some believed, while a large number of "the devout Greeks and of the chief women" also accepted his teaching. The unbelieving Jews, however, here as elsewhere, compassed the dismissal of Paul from the city.

2. *Date of the First Epistle.*—The order of events from the compulsory departure of the Apostle from Thessalonica to the date of the First Epistle to the Church there, is clearly described

in the Book of Acts (chaps. xvii. and xviii.). From that source we learn that after leaving Thessalonica with his companions, Silas and Timothy, St. Paul proceeded to Berea and thence to Athens. Whether Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica from Berea, or from some other point, does not appear; but it is certain that when St. Paul found it impossible to return himself (1 Thess. ii, 17, 18), he dispatched Timothy to encourage and establish the young converts in that place. Meanwhile the Apostle went on from Athens to Corinth, and there Silas and Timothy coming from Macedonia overtook him (Acts xviii. 5).

It was the tidings which Timothy brought which prompted the letter (1 Thess. iii. 6). The Epistle therefore would seem to have been written two or three months after the Apostle's visit, and most probably in the early part of the year 53 A.D. Between his visit and his letter, time must be given for the occurrence of such events as he alluded to in the letter, the death of some at least of the Thessalonian Christians (iv. 13), and the fame which their faith had attained not only in their own neighbourhood but in more remote localities (i. 8). But for these events two or three months is quite sufficient. The Epistle is therefore the earliest extant Epistle of St. Paul.

3. *The Occasion of Writing.*—As Timothy's arrival in Corinth enables us to fix the date of the Epistle, so must we find the occasion of it in the tidings brought by that messenger. The report was in the main favourable. Though suffering some persecution, the faith of the young converts was firm, their love for one another was still apparent, and their affection for St. Paul himself unabated (iii. 6). At the same time Timothy had not concealed their shortcomings, but had reported that some Greek vice still adhered to the new Christians (iv. 1—8); and also that the motives of the Apostle in bringing the Gospel to them had been called in question. Paul felt it necessary both for his own and for the Gospel's sake to defend his character from these accusations. There were also one or two irregularities appearing in the little Christian community which it was advisable to check. The persecution to which the Christians were subjected, though it did not avail to destroy their faith, made them more ready to listen to highly coloured pictures of the kingdom and coming of Christ. And such was the excited expectancy which the idea of the speedy return of Christ produced that some of them gave up their secular employment and became dependent idlers (iv. 11; v. 14). Others again were disturbed in their minds because they feared that their friends who died before the coming of Christ might miss the glory and joy of that event.

There was quite enough then in the condition of this young

Church to elicit a letter of counsel and encouragement from its founder. Baur, indeed, says that "the insignificance of its contents, the want of any special aim, and of any intelligible occasion or purpose, is itself a criterion adverse to a Pauline origin." But manifestly there was occasion ; and had there been no disorders in the Church which needed correction, and no slanderers whom it was expedient to gag, yet the mere affection of the Apostle for those who were suffering for the truth might well have prompted a friendly letter. Besides, the objection that there is no important teaching in the letter cuts two ways ; for, as Jowett observes, "if it were admitted that the absence of doctrinal ideas makes the Epistle unworthy of St Paul, it makes it also a forgery without an object."

4. *Evidence of Authenticity.*—But so obviously and flagrantly arbitrary is Baur's criticism of this Epistle, that the mass of those who usually follow him here part company, and accept this as a genuine production of St. Paul's. The external attestation to its authenticity is complete. The internal evidence is also strong. In no letter do Paul's emotional characteristics more conspicuously appear : his warm and eager acknowledgment of any good that could be seen in his converts, his anxiety for their welfare, his sympathy with their distresses, his desire to revisit them, his frank and humble egotism, the delicacy with which he alludes to shortcomings. In the words of Bishop Lightfoot, "The fineness and delicacy of touch with which the Apostle's relations toward his Thessalonian converts are drawn — his yearning to see them, his anxiety in the absence of Timothy, and his heartfelt rejoicing at the good news—are quite beyond the reach of the clumsy forgeries of the early Church. In the second place the writer uses language which, however it may be explained, is certainly coloured by the anticipation of the speedy advent of the Lord—language natural enough in the Apostle's own lips, but quite inconceivable in a forgery after his death, when time had disappointed these anticipations, and when the revival or mention of them would serve no purpose, and might seem to discredit the Apostle. Such a position would be an anachronism in a writer of the second century."

5. *Survey of Contents.*—In the first three chapters of the Epistle the writer's object is to encourage his Thessalonian converts, and to cleanse their minds of every idea which might obstruct or retard their perseverance. It begins by assuring them that their faith and its fruit hitherto have been matter of constant gratitude to God on his part (i. 1—3) ; and that they may be stimulated to surpass previous efforts he reminds them that their faith had manifestly been God's work, and that their election

had been proved by their being made an exemplary instance of God's power in converting idolaters and bringing them to the true God (i. 4—10). The two conspicuous features of his visit to Thessalonica had been those which he mentions in i. 9, the power which had characterized his own preaching, and the unusually striking effects of it.

In the second chapter he first expatiates on the former, and then on the latter of these features. In ii. 1—12 he repels the calumnies and insinuations which had been set in circulation about his interested motives, and appeals to the Thessalonians themselves as witnesses of his blameless life, his freedom from avarice and indolence, and his confidence in the value of the message he delivered to them. In the paragraph ii. 13—16, he appeals to their steadfastness under persecution in proof that his Gospel was the word of God; and, therefore, by implication, that he was God's commissioned servant. In ii. 17—iii. 13, he continues to defend himself, but now against the aspersion of cowardice and fickleness which were supposed to be shown in his sudden abandonment of Thessalonica, leaving his converts to fight their own battle. To this he replies that he had striven to return, that although absent in body he was with them in spirit, and lived by their prosperity and progress; and he further reminds them how he had been content to remain alone in a strange and hostile city that he might send his companion to aid them and bring news of them.

This forms the true body of the Epistle, and the rest is supplementary, as is shown by the connecting phrase "Furthermore," or, as the Revised Version more accurately has it, "Finally, then." In this supplement the Apostle admonishes his readers to hold fast to the commandments of the Lord which he had made known to them, and especially to beware of unchastity, little as it might be thought of among their heathen friends (iv. 1—8). Of brotherly love he would not have spoken had not some manifestations of their spirit endangered that love; he exhorts them, therefore, to increase in love, and to study to be quiet, and to earn their own bread (iv. 9—12). And as it was the expectation of the Lord's coming which had led some to give up their ordinary employments, so the same expectation had led them to curious and unwise questionings regarding the fate of those who die before that event, and regarding the time at which it is to be expected. These questionings St. Paul deprecates. Those who die before the Lord's coming are at no disadvantage, and the precise time no one can tell; the children of light will not be taken unawares (iv. 13; v. 11). The Epistle then passes into a series of admonitions, not as a river loses itself in a marsh,

for these admonitions are not abstract and random, but are directed pointedly at the actual conditions and needs of the Thessalonians, and it concludes with the injunction that it be publicly read.

6. *The Question of Pauline Doctrine.*—There is then in this Epistle little affirmation of what is known as specially Pauline doctrine. “Of the inability of the natural man to work out his own salvation, of the seat of sin in the flesh, of justification by grace, or of community of life with Christ mediated by His Spirit, of the position of the Christian as regards the law, or of the Apostle’s profound reflections on the relation of Christianity to Judaism and heathenism, we have not a word.” From this fact it is commonly inferred that at the date of this Epistle the theology of St. Paul had not attained that complete development which it afterwards reached. That may be so, but the proof of it can scarcely be found in this Epistle, in which he was addressing a Church whose difficulties were practical and personal rather than doctrinal. The constantly recurring theme of the Epistle is the Coming of the Lord (i. 10; ii. 19; iii. 13; v. 23).

The Church at Thessalonica was largely composed of Gentiles, and to Gentiles, as we see from the Apostle’s speech at Athens, appeal could most effectually be made through conscience. St. Paul set before the Gentiles Jesus as the Lord appointed by God to judge the world in righteousness; and hence in this brief Epistle it is mainly this aspect of the gospel he alluded to. “There are many reasons why the subject of the second advent should occupy a larger space in the earliest stage of the Apostolical teaching than afterwards. It was closely bound up with the fundamental fact of the gospel, the resurrection of Christ, and thus it formed a natural starting point of Christian doctrine. It afforded the true satisfaction to those Messianic hopes which had drawn the Jewish converts to the fold of Christ. It was the best consolation and support of the infant Church under persecution, which must have been most keenly felt in the first abandonment of worldly pleasures and interests; more especially, as telling of a righteous Judge who would not overlook iniquity, it was essential to that call to repentance which must everywhere precede the direct and positive teaching of the gospel” (Bishop Lightfoot).

7. *The Second Epistle.*—The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was evoked by a misunderstanding of some expressions used in the First, and was probably written a few months after it, and certainly while Paul, Silas, and Timothy were still together at Corinth. These brethren are included with the Apostle in the inscription of the Epistle. The allusion in c. iii. 1, 2, to opposition

which was being made to their work agrees very well with the account given in Acts xviii. 12, of the disturbances in Corinth which resulted in the appeal to the Proconsul. Grotius, indeed, maintained that this so-called Second Epistle was in reality the First, and in this idea he is followed by Ewald, Renan, and other critics; but there is really no plausibility in such a supposition.

The Second Epistle not only presupposes, but expressly refers to the First (ii. 15). In the First the allusions to St. Paul's recent work in Thessalonica are, as was natural, abundant and vivid; in the Second such allusions are rare. The Parousia, which is spoken of as imminent in the First Epistle, is in the Second more guardedly, though more definitely, explained. The hostility of the Jews, which at the date of the earlier Epistle had begun to make itself felt, has at the date of the Second become formidable.

8. *The Object of the Writer.*—The object of this Epistle was to remove some misunderstandings of what Paul had said in his previous letter regarding the coming of the Lord. The Thessalonians had received the impression that "the day of Christ was at hand" (ii. 2), and in consequence they had on the one hand been perplexed to find that the months went by without any fulfilment of this expectation, and on the other hand they were led into idle and disorderly conduct. That they were still exposed to persecution, and found no relief from the manifestation of the Lord, St. Paul assures them is only a more certain proof that a manifestation for the judgment of their enemies and for their deliverance will one day take place (i. 4—12). And as they are not to be disturbed by their continued suffering, so neither are they to be disturbed by the non-intervention of the Lord's judgment, as if this had been definitely predicted as speedily to take place. For much must first take place; lawlessness must come to a head in a person before the personal coming of Christ destroys it (ii. 1—12). They themselves were chosen to salvation, which they should attain by holding fast what he had taught them (ii. 13—17). After asking their prayers he concludes by giving them stringent instructions regarding such members of their Church as walked disorderly, being carried away by the expectation of the Second Coming.

9. *Authenticity.*—The authenticity of this Epistle has frequently been called in question. Weiss says that "the rejection of the Second Epistle has become almost as universal in the modern critical school as the recognition of the First." This rejection bases itself on two grounds. It is thought that the view taken of the Parousia in the one Epistle disagrees with that taken in the other. The First Epistle speaks of it as imminent; the Second

as not immediate. But on more careful examination of the First Epistle it is found that it is rather the suddenness than the immediacy of the Parousia that is urged, and that St. Paul explicitly declines to say anything of the times and seasons.

The other ground of rejection is found in the apocalyptic language of the second chapter. It is maintained that the eschatology of this chapter is not the eschatology of Paul, but is borrowed from the book of Revelation. The man of sin is supposed to be Nero, of whom it was believed that he had not died, but was hidden in the East, and was destined to return. The "withholder" is Vespasian; and the Epistle must therefore have been written about the year 68 or 70 A.D. Certainly if this be the true interpretation of the passage it cannot have been written by Paul.

But the actual circumstances in which Paul was placed, as described in the Book of Acts, give us the key to the true interpretation of the passage. It was from the Jews the chief danger to the young Christian Church was to be apprehended. It was by the Jews the Apostle himself had everywhere been counterworked and assailed; and it was by them, also, that the Thessalonians had been persecuted. The Jewish hostility to the Gospel was, however, held in check by the Roman magistracy; and wherever St. Paul went he had new proof that, without the protection accorded to him and to his converts by imperial authority and justice, the Christian Church would be crushed in its infancy. This Jewish anatocism Paul believed was to culminate in an Antichrist, a false Messiah, necessarily a Jew, who should head the anti-Christian movement, and only be defeated by the appearance of Christ Himself. These expectations were derived from the eschatological discourses of the Lord Himself; and the expressions and phraseology in which they were embodied find their roots in these discourses and in the Book of Daniel. It is quite true that such ideas seem incongruous in Paul's writings, for in general he has little to say of such subjects; but compelled, as he in this instance was, to allude to the future of Judaism and Christianity, there is nothing in what he says which indicates later date or ideas which contradict his known opinions.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO
TIMOTHY AND TITUS.

1. *Authorship*.—When any book arrests our attention, we begin to feel an interest in the author. What manner of man, we ask, was he who put down those words which seem to live and which have such power to move our hearts? This is a natural question; and with the answer to it comes renewed interest in the book. As we know something of the writer, the significance of his words and phrases is found to deepen and widen. Our attention becomes more sympathetic. We hear as it were a human voice behind the words. The writer has been brought nearer to us; and our hearts kindle with the consciousness of personal friendliness.

But it should be remembered that the value of the book was established in our minds before our curiosity concerning its authorship was awakened. We may indeed read a book which was written by a friend, and we may be tempted to give it a fictitious value because of our friendship; but the great works of the world have not been treated thus. They have made their way in the world without the support of patronage or the partiality of friendship. They were their own patrons: their value to the minds and souls of men is in one sense wholly apart from their authorship. We are not interested in the book because of its author: we are interested in the author because of the book.

We have only to recall the books which have made good their hold upon humanity to feel the truth of this statement. The “Imitation of Christ” has had a circulation beyond all other books, except the Bible. The question of the authorship can hardly be considered as absolutely answered. The force of the book awakens the interest in the writer. The “Iliad,” by its own colossal worth, claimed a world-wide fame, and thus called forth the contest between the cities which claimed the honour of

being the author's birthplace. The Bible itself gives illustrations of this principle. Ecclesiastes and Job stir our interest and curiosity to know something of their writers; but their true value remains whether the question of authorship can be answered or not.

We turn to these Pastoral Epistles. They have a value apart from their authorship. Doubtless there are reasons why the question of authorship must impart special significance and importance to these letters; but it is a mistake to treat them as though they had not a value independent of the writer. We need only open the Epistles and read to convince ourselves of their value.

The end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned (1 Tim. i. 5).

Faithful is the saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners (1 Tim. i. 15).

Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5).

God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and love and discipline (2 Tim. i. 7).

Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness (2 Tim. ii. 19).

When the kindness of God our Saviour and His love toward man appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy, He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost which He poured upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Lord (Titus iii. 4—6).

Words such as these carry a message to the heart and the conscience. We do not need to ask who wrote them. Their message is for us. The truths they embody are independent of author or of age. They live on the pages of these Epistles for the eternal help of humankind. They are messages from Heaven to earth. The human hand that wrote them down was, we think, St. Paul's, but, even were it another's, the messages would remain, and they would speak with abiding force to the hearts of the sons of men. "The religious consciousness which was quickened by the words of prophets and apostles in turn ratified their writings."

The profit which we may gain from the study of these letters is not wholly lost by reason of any doubts thrown upon their authorship.

But our interest may be lessened and the range of their authoritativeness diminished. It is, therefore, our duty next to enquire somewhat about the writer.

2. *Could St. Paul have written these Epistles?*—Here first a question arises which we may call the biographical problem. It has been said that, on biographical grounds, it is impossible that St. Paul could have written these letters. It may be conceded that the question has its difficulties. The arguments on both sides may be likened to two threads, both of which are slight, but their relative strength is best tested when it is asked which of them can the better bear the strain put upon them.

The opponents of the Epistles ground their opinions on the difficulty of finding a place and time for the writing of these Epistles in the life of St. Paul. This difficulty depends upon another question. Was St. Paul released after his captivity recorded in the Acts? If he was not released, he did not write these Epistles; for, in these Epistles, he speaks of journeys which can only have been taken after such a release. The record in the Acts of the Apostles cannot be considered complete as far as it goes. It leaves no room for a journey to Crete, for instance.

St. Paul's release is a fact which is necessary, therefore, if we are to accept these Epistles as genuine. Now the Acts of the Apostles leaves us in doubt. The last scene with which it presents us is that of St. Paul in his hired house under the surveillance of the soldier who guarded him. We are told that this state of things lasted two years. Are we at liberty, when the book ends with such a description of the Apostle's position, to make any conjectures or to draw any inferences?

We are, I think, at liberty to infer that at the close of the two years some change in the Apostle's position occurred. Now, only two conjectures concerning the nature of such a change are (as far as I can see) admissible. His position was changed either for the better or for the worse. The better could only be release; the worse could only be the severer custody followed sooner or later by martyrdom. It is hard to believe that, if the latter had been the case, the writer of the Acts would not have said so. Of course, circumstances might have made it impossible; but yet there is a probability that, having been able to record the two years' imprisonment, he had the opportunity of adding the very few words which would tell of the great Apostle's final trial and martyr-triumph.

But he added nothing. Does his silence imply that the Apostle's condition was bettered when the two years were accomplished? The only bettering was release. But if the imprisonment ended in release, all the Apostle's friends knew of it, for

he was among them ; and this being the case, there was no call upon St. Luke to add a word more.

The matter, therefore, stands thus :—If he had opportunity of adding more, and yet was content to leave his narrative incomplete, his silence is explicable only on the assumption of a release. On the other hand it is only on the assumption that the writer had no opportunity of adding a word that we can explain his silence, supposing the Apostle passed from imprisonment to death.

Hence in proportion to the probability that the writer had the chance of writing more, is the probability of the Apostle's release. If death cut the writer's life short—if such circumstances occurred which made writing impossible, then these two chances of a release or of worsened lot remain where they were—unknown, and, so far, equal chances. But if the writer was free to write, and did not write more, it can only have been because it was needless, seeing that the Apostle had been restored to the Churches of God, which he had founded and fostered.

At this point the general impression and opinion of early times may legitimately help us. The Acts of the Apostles does not negative this theory of a release. It leaves the door open to a faint supposition in favour of the theory ; and we find, as a fact, there were in early times those who believed that such a release took place. The balance, therefore, moved perhaps by small weights, drops with some decisiveness in the direction of the release theory. Again, the very existence of these Pastoral Epistles (whether written by St. Paul or not) is in favour of the theory ; no writer would have written letters in the name of the Apostle, and connected them with a time when the Apostle was known to be dead.

On the whole, then, it seems fair to say that the probability is that the Apostle was released, and that there was a period of his life in which he could have written these Pastoral Epistles.

3. *External Evidence of Authorship.*—A few words must be said respecting the external evidence. The external authority is strong, and it is unquestionably in favour of their genuineness.

It is believed that in early times they were rejected by some heterodox teachers—such, for instance, as Basilides ; but whatever importance might attach to this fact (if it be a fact) is neutralized when we learn that the rejection of these letters was not due to any literary or critical evidence against them, but to doctrinal prejudice.

Dean Alford wrote :—“There never was the slightest doubt in the ancient Church that the Epistles to Timothy and Titus were canonical, and written by St. Paul.” All external authority confirms this statement. We have not space for individual

quotations, but the following will illustrate the general position.

Irenæus quotes from these Epistles, and quotes them as the Apostle's, using the phrase—"As the Apostle says," or, "As Paul commands." Clement of Alexandria quotes these Epistles frequently: he recognises them as St. Paul's, and explains that Basilides rejected them on doctrinal grounds. Tertullian's evidence is in the same direction. The Peshito-Syriac Version contains the Epistles, and they are recognised in the Mercatorian Fragment. In addition to these witnesses, phrases and words occur in Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Hegesippus, Athenagoras, which imply an acquaintance with these Epistles.

One illustration of the evidential value of this early acquaintance with these Epistles may be of interest. In the Epistle which Clement addressed in the name of the Roman Christians to the Corinthian Church, three names are mentioned (Ep. ad Cor.), Claudius Ephebus, Valerius Bito, and Fortunatus. These men are described as "faithful and prudent men who have walked among us from youth unto old age unblameably." Men who have reached "old age" must be able to carry back their memories over thirty or forty years at least. The date of the Epistle in which they are mentioned is A.D. 95. Their recollection must have reached back to the imprisonment of St. Paul. St. Paul must have been a venerable memory to such men. Whatever writings of his remained would be cherished: forged writings claiming his name would hardly escape denunciation, especially if they dealt largely with names of those who must have been personally known to these Roman Christians. In any case, a forged or doubtful letter of the great Apostle would hardly be used, or its phrases used with approval.

But in this very letter to the Corinthian Church, which was carried to Corinth by men who must have known St. Paul, allusions to the Pastoral Epistles are found. We can hear the echoes of familiar phrases. We hear of the "lifting up of holy hands," of walking in "witness of Spirit" (cf. 1 Tim. ii. 8), and we are reminded that our Lord and Master is "King of the Ages" (cf. 1 Tim. i. 17). It is difficult not to feel that these expressions came naturally to the writer, and are used as phrases which reverent affection delights to employ. Of course it is quite conceivable that such words carry memories of St. Paul's teaching while he was at Rome. They may have been heard from his lips by the Roman Christians, and so they may have been familiar to them not through the Pastoral Epistles, but through his ministry among them. But the occurrence of such familiar phrases, taken in conjunction with the undoubted opinion of the

earliest times, must be allowed as a factor in the problem, and its value must be counted on the side of the Pauline authorship of the Epistles. Thus as far as external authority is concerned, the matter stands thus: These Epistles were known in very early times, and early accepted as St. Paul's.

4. *Internal Evidence of Authorship.*—The internal evidence must be considered. The language is said to be unlike that of St. Paul's other writings. There are in the First Epistle to Timothy no less than seventy-four words not used elsewhere. The Second Epistle has forty-six such words, and that to Titus forty-eight. This means that the peculiar words bear a proportion of about 4 to 4½ per cent. of the number of words used. It would be an interesting enquiry to search out the percentage of peculiar words used in the various works of other writers. Personally I somewhat distrust these arithmetical calculations respecting literary subjects. A man's vocabulary, no doubt, is limited, but in no work is he likely to exhaust his whole vocabulary. He may be described as a ship at anchor or as an animal tethered, and the area in which the ship can float at anchor, or over which the animal can graze, will represent his vocabulary; but neither does the ship float always on the same side of its anchor, nor does the animal feed over the same grass. The one swings with the tide, the other varies his pasture; and writers draw from one storehouse of their vocabulary at one time and unlock another storehouse at another time.

Further the analogy is not wholly true, for the ship cannot stretch its cable nor the animal its rope, but man can enlarge the range of his vocabulary; and this is especially the case with men whose lives are spent in travelling and in frequent converse with men of different classes, occupations, and nationalities. At each stage of his journey he picks up new words or rehabilitates old ones. From the sailors he will gather nautical phrases; from the shopmen the language of commerce, from the lawyer the judicial phrases. More than this, his varying experiences will suggest new illustrations of his favourite thoughts, and these in their turn will generate new phrases or special forms of expression. To a man of active mind and observing habits, life is a perpetual enrichment of his vocabulary. And none will deny the varied experience, the mental vigour, the penetrating powers of observation of St. Paul.

He had a pliancy of disposition which was a kind of genius in its way. In the time of the shipwreck, he steps into a position of almost supremacy; he has won the confidence of the sailors, and he has established himself in the favour of the centurion. Do we not feel that the Apostle who wrought with the men of his

craft as a tent-maker, was just the kind of man who would mingle as freely as he could among the crew of his ship, and while seeking the good of the men, glean up many a sailor's phrase, and gain a sympathetic knowledge of his companions' work? To such a man every journey would mean enlargement of knowledge and enrichment of language. And the statistics of his language bear this out. It is not in the Pastoral Epistles alone that we find this exuberance of language and the use of peculiar words. In the Epistle to the Romans there are one hundred and eleven peculiar words; one hundred and eighty-six in 1 and 2 Corinthians; fifty-seven in Galatians, and fifty-four in Philippians.

With these figures before us, and bearing in mind the activity and versatility of the Apostle's mind, the objections raised on the ground of language become, to say the least, of doubtful value.

5. *Alleged Doctrinal Discrepancies.*—It is further urged that the theological position in these Epistles differs from that taken up in those letters which are the undoubted works of St. Paul. "Faith, which in Paul's view had been the subjective act of the surrender of the heart to Christ, acquires now a completely objective, dogmatic significance; it is sometimes soundness of belief, or submission to the form of teaching sanctioned by the Church; at others it is really identified with that teaching and so becomes thus doctrinal belief (*fides quæ creditur*), which already begins to be definitely fixed in formula as a *regula fidei*, after the manner of creeds. . . . Faith consists simply in a dogmatic assent to the doctrine of the Church: it can no longer of itself bring justification, but requires to be supplemented by love and other virtues; further, though at first the meritoriousness of good works is denied, they acquire even greater significance and value, so that the First Epistle to Timothy is able to see in them a great foundation and degree of salvation."

On this we may remark that the scientific aspect (if we may use the phrase) of Christianity and its administrative order would be naturally given a prominence in those Epistles which are addressed to an official of the Church. A man necessarily varies the tone of his language, and of the order of his thoughts as he addresses different classes. But, further, even allowing for this, I think that the passage which I have quoted gives a somewhat harsh view of the position adopted in the Pastoral Epistles. Take the single word faith. This, it is said, has in the Pastoral Epistles lost its subjective meaning, and has found a dogmatic one. It is *fides quæ creditur*. It is true that the word faith is used in these Epistles in this sense, but not in all the passages which are cited in support of the theory advanced. If

we admit that the writer speaks of *the* faith, we find that he is also earnest in speaking of faith in the hearts of the people.

Reference is made by Pfleiderer to ten passages—1 Tim. i. 4, 5, 19; ii. 7; iii. 9; iv. 1, 6; vi. 10, 21; Tit. i. 4. It will not be lost time to touch upon them. Of these ten passages, three certainly are used without any such necessary dogmatic significance, and two appear to me to be at least doubtful. The remaining five suggest the thought of the symbolism of faith—the creed. But if this be the state of the case, where is the ground for saying that the old subjective use of the word has disappeared and that intellectual assent has taken the place of a faith which is the grasp of the heart? It was perfectly natural that the grasp of the heart upon the Lord who redeemed it should define and describe itself, and that faith should find expression in *the* *faith*; but neither is *the* *faith* a new element found first in these Epistles, and not discoverable elsewhere in St. Paul's writings, nor has the old subjective and personal sense of the word been forgotten or left out of sight here.

Further, it must not be overlooked that there is in these Epistles a spirit of tolerance and the sagacity which recognizes changed conditions. It is not fair to represent these letters as though they were the sapless directions of a man who had lost the warmth and moisture of life, and was content with the hard, dry outline of what once had been living and luxuriant growth. There are, it is true, signs that Christianity has become more apparent: the necessity for order, for government, and for discipline, has become apparent; but with this necessity there has arisen another, which could not have been perceived by one who had fallen under the yoke of an unethical dogmatism.

The new necessity is the necessity of more humane views of the order of life, and larger thoughts concerning the work of Christianity in the world. There are a number of questions which fill men's minds and tongues which the writer dismisses as indifferent and valueless. One thing is the beginning and end of all—charity, out of a pure conscience and of faith unfeigned (1 Tim. i. 5—7). It is because men have forgotten this supreme ethical goal of teaching that divisions of opinion and irresponsible dogmatists have arisen. The line of demarcation between the Church and the world is not to be made darker and broader. All, whether they have accepted formally the teaching of Christ or not, are to be viewed as objects of prayer and intercession, because all are dear to the heart of God. “I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men—for kings and for all that are in authority . . . for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour who

will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 1—4); and in the same spirit the writer says later that God is "the Saviour of all men."

In this latter case, he is defending society against the spirit of extravagant asceticism which he foresees will develop with the growth of ecclesiastical pride. Men will come to look upon external matters as making the difference between man and man. Marriage will be forbidden, and questions of bodily exercise will occupy men's attention. It will be forgotten that the inward spirit of godliness is of the first importance. Men may differ much in outward action. Many things are indifferent, but the spirit in which they are done is of measureless importance. Godliness is profitable unto all things. Every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving (1 Tim. iv. 4). The one thing to be dreaded is the outward form without the inward life (2 Tim. iii. 5). The real foundation of men's spiritual life is inward—spiritual and ethical—not external (2 Tim. ii. 19). Outwardly there will always be variety. Vessels of various forms, materials, and uses will be found in the Master's house. To be a clean vessel and serviceable is the matter of main importance for each man's self. For the rest, the Master of the house must judge. Hereafter the division will be made by Him who cannot err. For the present, the real call of the grace of God is a call to godliness, temperance, righteousness, to good works and not to profitless questions and contentions (Titus ii. 11—14 and iii. 8, 9). More might be said, but there is enough here to show that the same ethical spirit which urged the claims of righteousness, toleration, and charity elsewhere (Gal. v. 16 *sqq.*; Rom. vi. 11 *sqq.* 12, 18) is not wanting in these Epistles.

6. *The Balance of Critical Opinion.*—But whatever may be said on this subject, we are met with the frankest confessions of the Pauline character of these letters. Thus Ewald, Pfleiderer, and Haurrath see, in two passages of the Second Epistle to Timothy (chap. i. 15—18, and iv. 9—21) genuine Pauline elements. Renan, after having explicitly said that these three Epistles were forged, proceeds to say, "Some passages in these three Epistles are also so beautiful that the question might be asked whether the forger had not some authentic letters of St. Paul in his possession which he embodied in his apocryphal compositions." ("The Christian Church," chap. vi., p. 52, in the English translation.) In other words, the force of St. Paul's hand is felt. It is like the question of the genuineness of a picture. The hand of the master is recognised somewhere even by those who cannot accept it as completely genuine.

On the whole, then, the result is this: The biographical difficulties are great, but they cannot be called decisive against the Pauline authorship of these letters. The hypothesis that the letters were forgeries is beset by still greater difficulties. The external evidence is wholly on the side of the genuineness; and the linguistic argument cannot be quoted as decisive against it. The historical argument, grounded on the allusions to certain heretical notions and the ripe organisation of the Church evidenced in the Epistles, has not the force which has been attributed to them. The heretical notions may be shown to be alluded to elsewhere in St. Paul's genuine writings; and the argument based on Church organisation, is, I think, largely illusory.

Space forbids me to enter further into these questions. It will at any rate be some consolation to those who have found in these Epistles much teaching and refreshment to know that the influence of St. Paul is recognised in these letters even by those who will not acknowledge that they are St. Paul's. We can still listen to the old Apostle declaring his unshaken faith and his experience of the unfailing help of his Master. The Lord stood with me and strengthened me. The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL
TO
PHILEMON.

1. *Character of the Epistle.*—The place of the Epistle to Philemon among the New Testament books has been compared to the position of Ruth among those of the Old Testament. It is “an idyl of domestic life,” in which we escape from the storm of controversy. Timothy is associated with Paul in the greeting, and formally the letter is addressed to the Church of which Philemon was a member; but really it is a private letter from Paul to Philemon. The others may have been included in the address because Paul wished that Onesimus should not merely be reinstated in Philemon’s household, but should be admitted to the fellowship of the Church.

Of Philemon nothing is known beyond what may be gathered from this letter and that to the Colossians, unless we accept as additional information the statement of Theodoret that he saw Philemon’s house in Colossæ. That he was resident in Colossæ appears from Col. iv. 9. He had been brought to the Christian faith by Paul (19), and had become a prominent and useful member of the Church (4—7), if not its founder (cp. Col. ii. 1, and Philemon 1). His wife, Appia, was also a Christian, and Archippus is commonly supposed to have been their son, and was certainly an active member of the Church (Col. iv. 17).

2. *Occasion and Purpose.*—The occasion of the letter was peculiar. Onesimus, one of Philemon’s slaves, had committed some delinquency, possibly, as Dr. Abbott suggests, an unpreserved theft (cp. 18), and had absconded. Naturally he turned his face to Rome, to which every road led, and where hiding could best be secured, and a new life most readily entered. Whether impelled by want or by curiosity, or by weariness of wrong-doing, or perhaps by mere accident, he met with Paul, and was arrested by his words. To the life in Christ opened to him by Paul he gave himself cordially, and with his slave’s handiness

soon made himself so useful that the Apostle parted with him reluctantly (11—14). But to retain him Paul feels would be to steal him, or at any rate to deprive Philemon of the pleasure of voluntarily sending him to assist and minister to him (14). Besides, it would be better both for Onesimus and for Philemon that the penitent and Christianised slave should return to his master. Accordingly he is sent with this exquisitely worded letter which, if he heard it read, or himself wrote it as Paul's amanuensis, must have shown him that his forgiveness was a foregone conclusion.

The delicacy, courtesy, and right feeling exhibited in the letter have again and again been remarked upon. After quoting the very similar letter of the younger Pliny, Bishop Lightfoot proceeds to compare the two, and says: "The younger Pliny is the noblest type of a true Roman gentleman, and this touching letter needs no words of praise. Yet, if purity of diction be excepted, there will hardly be any difference of opinion in awarding the palm to the Christian Apostle. As an expression of simple dignity, of refined courtesy, of large sympathy, and of warm personal affection, the Epistle to Philemon stands unrivalled." A playfulness too, which rarely had opportunity in Paul's life of coming to the surface, appears in the eleventh verse. "Onesimus (Profitable) who was to thee in time past unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me;" and even more obviously in verse twenty, "Yea, brother, may I be profited by thee in the Lord."

3. *Authenticity.*—The authenticity of this note is undoubtedly. It was included in the first collection of Pauline writings, which was made by Marcion about the year 140 A.D. Baur, indeed, was compelled, by his rejection of Colossians, whose authenticity is implicated with that of Philemon, to reject this Epistle also, but he was conscious of the awkwardness of his position and apologizes for it. "In the case of this Epistle," he says, "more than any other, if criticism should inquire for evidence in favour of its apostolic name, it seems liable to the reproach of hyper-criticism, of exaggerated suspicion, of restless doubt, from the attacks of which nothing is safe. What has criticism to do with this short, attractive, friendly letter, inspired as it is by the noblest Christian feeling, and which has never yet been touched by the breath of suspicion?" Notwithstanding this freedom from suspicion the letter is assailed by Baur, who supposes it was intended as a romance from which readers might learn that what was lost in the world was recovered in Christianity, and that for ever. It might also serve to illustrate the manner in which slaves should be dealt with in the Church. Certainly if these were the writer's purposes, he lost his labour, for the early

Church took very slight notice of the Epistle, and did not draw from it these lessons.

4. *Effect of the Epistle.*—That the Epistle to Philemon had any considerable effect in ameliorating the condition of slaves, or in accomplishing their emancipation, was not to be expected. From the first, slaves were freely admitted into the Church, and some of them rose to office in it. Their servile condition was no bar to their admission to Church privileges, while of some of these privileges it greatly enhanced the value. But as a general rule Christian masters retained their slaves in slavery, although the force of Christ's spirit taught them to deal more justly and tenderly with them, and gradually it came to be considered a religious act to emancipate or ransom slaves. But no general emancipation was thought of until the ninth century. Indeed the Church herself frequently held slaves as ecclesiastical property. The emancipation of slaves and other great social changes have been effected not by edicts issued by Christ and his Apostles, but by the gradual and inevitable pervasion of the whole of human life by the spirit of Christ.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE
HEBREWS.

1. *Author.*—An ordinary reader of the Bible would notice that the Epistle to the Hebrews is separated from the Epistles written by St. Paul to other Churches by those which he addressed to individuals; and he would perhaps observe that neither the name of the writer nor of the readers is found in it. But the title supplies the information, and the subscription at the end further states that it was written from Italy (and sent) by (the hand of) Timothy. He would not suspect that the facts which had attracted his attention raise some of the most difficult questions connected with the books of the New Testament.

(i.) The antiquity of the Epistle is remarkably attested. There is repeated reference to it in St. Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians, written before the end of the first century—a fact noticed by Eusebius, E. H. iii. 38. Clement does not name any book of the New Testament except, in one place, St. Paul's (first) Epistle to the Corinthians. But he adopts the language of our Epistle more than that of any of the others. One instance will show how he makes use of it. “Through him the Master willed that we should taste of immortal knowledge; *Who being the brightness of His Majesty is so much greater than the Angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name.* For so it is written; *Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire;* but of His Son the Master said thus: *Thou art My Son, I this day have begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Thy possession.* And again He said unto Him; *Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet* (36).” This anonymous use of the Epistle is continued by Justin Martyr about the middle of the second century, and somewhat later in a fragment of Pinytus of Crete—Eusebius, E. H. iv. 23.

The first distinct mention is in Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 165—220, who ascribes it to St. Paul, and often quotes it. But Eusebius records (E. H. vi. 14) from one of his lost works his modification of St. Paul's authorship, as far as regards the form in which we have it. "Clement, in his *Outlines*, to speak generally, has given concise explanations of all the Canonical Scriptures. . . . And, moreover, he says that the Epistle to the Hebrews is Paul's, but that it was written to the Hebrews in the Hebrew dialect, and that Luke, having carefully translated it, published it for the use of the Greeks. And that it is owing to the fact that he translated it that the complexion of this Epistle and that of the Acts is found to be the same. Further he remarks that it is natural that the phrase *Paul an Apostle* does not occur in the Subscription, for in writing to the Hebrews, who had conceived a prejudice against him, he was wise in not repelling them at the beginning by affixing his name. And then, a little further on, he adds: and as the blessed presbyter before now used to say, since the Lord as being the Apostle of the Almighty, was sent unto the Hebrews, Paul, through his modesty, inasmuch as he was sent to the Gentiles, does not inscribe himself Apostle of the Hebrews, both on account of the honour due to the Lord and because it was a work of supererogation that he addressed an Epistle to the Hebrews also, since he was herald and apostle to the Gentiles." The "blessed presbyter" spoken of is probably Pantænus, Clement's predecessor as head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria. This carries the tradition of St. Paul's being the writer a long way back towards the Apostolic age. Clement receives it and passes it on, adding the statement about St. Luke, whether from tradition or as his own conjecture.

Origen succeeded Clement in his office, and Eusebius tells us how he expressed himself on the subject. "In addition to these statements he (Origen) thus discusses the Epistle to the Hebrews in his Homilies upon it: Every one who is competent to judge of differences of diction would acknowledge that the style of the Epistle entitled To the Hebrews does not exhibit the Apostle's rudeness and simplicity in speech, though he acknowledged himself to be *simple in his speech*, that is in his diction; but it is more truly Greek in its composition. And again, that the thoughts of the Epistle are wonderful, and not second to the acknowledged writings of the Apostle, every one who pays attention to the reading of the Apostle's works would also grant to be true. And, after other remarks, he adds: "If I were to express my own opinion, I should say that the thoughts are the Apostle's, but the diction and composition that of some one who recorded from memory the Apostle's teaching, and, as

it were, illustrated with a brief commentary the sayings of his Master. If, then, any Church hold this Epistle to be Paul's, we cannot find fault with it for so doing; for it was not without good reason that the men of old time have handed it down as Paul's. But who it was who wrote the Epistle, God only knows certainly. The account which has reached us is [manifold], some saying that Clement, who became Bishop of Rome, wrote it, while others assign it to Luke, author of the Gospel and the Acts."—E. H. vi. 25. Here Origen goes beyond Clement of Alexandria in giving it as his opinion that the writer was not St. Paul, but one of his scholars, the teaching being identical, so that it might be said to be ultimately his. Accordingly, in his own quotations he speaks of it as a writing of Paul or "the Apostle." In this sense the Church of Alexandria continued to accept it. Eusebius himself agreed with Clement that Paul wrote it in Hebrew, but he was inclined to think that Clement of Rome was its translator—E. H. iii. 98.

The Pauline authorship was assumed, apparently without entering further into the matter, by the other Greek Fathers of the fourth century. Thus, in all the Greek Churches of the East, it seems to have been always recognised as Canonical, deriving its authority directly or indirectly from St. Paul. Similarly, in the native Syrian Church it was included among the Canonical Books in the old version (Peshito), but it found a place after Philemon, and was not attributed to St. Paul in the Title or Subscription: while Jacob of Nisibis in the earlier and Ephrem Syrus in the later part of the fourth century treat it as a writing of St. Paul.

(ii.) The history of its reception in the Western Church is very different. We have seen the high estimation in which it was held by Clement of Rome. After him there followed a long silence about it. The testimony of Irenæus, though writing in Gaul in the latter part of the second century, strictly belongs to the Church of Asia Minor, whence he came in his youth. Eusebius tells us that he mentioned the Epistle in one of his works and quoted from it, and a few coincidences of language are found in his extant writings, but he was said not to have considered that St. Paul was the author. Of those who strictly belonged to the Latin Churches Tertullian is the first who mentions it by name. He does so in one place only (de Pudic. 20), and then not as the writing of Paul, but Barnabas, assigning it a secondary authority, which shows that it had no place in the Canon of the Church of North Africa. And this is the more remarkable because the passage quoted is vi. 4—8, which at first sight favours his Montanist views, so that he would have every

inducement to claim the highest possible authority for the Epistle.

It was not quoted by Novatian nor St. Cyprian. Eusebius mentions its rejection by the Church of Rome in his own day—E. H. iii. 3. It is not before the middle of the fourth century that we find it used by Western writers, first by Hilary of Poitiers, and subsequently by St. Ambrose and Philastrius of Brescia. These writers speak of the support which the Novatians affected to derive from it, which may have encouraged Church writers in their disinclination to acknowledge it. But new influences had now set in. The Arian Controversy made the different parts of the Church better acquainted with each other, and the Western divines were impressed by the recognition of the Epistle which they found in the East.

In A.D. 397 it was reckoned as St. Paul's along with his thirteen Epistles in the Canon of the Third Council of Carthage. Jerome and Augustine lent their powerful help in the same direction, treating the Epistle as possessed of the authority of St. Paul, though not concealing the uncertainty of themselves and others as to the degree in which he was its actual author. After their time it came into full recognition everywhere, and was mostly thought to have been written by St. Paul.

(iii.) Enough has been said about its canonicity, but we must pursue the question of authorship. It arose again at the time of the Reformation. Erasmus and Cajetan on the one side, and Luther and Calvin on the other, were satisfied that it was not written by St. Paul. The chief reasons for not assigning it to him are: (1) The improbability that he would write to a Church the members of which to a great extent regarded him with dislike. (2) In ii. 3 the writer classes himself along with his readers among those who had received the Gospel at second-hand, from those who had heard the Lord; whereas St. Paul was accustomed to vindicate his authority by the direct revelation and commission which he had received—cf. Gal. i. 1; ii. 2, 6. (3) The difference of style, which in St. Paul shows no trace of art. Speech was to him merely an instrument of expressing his meaning in the readiest way, and consequently it was a reflection of the impetuosity of his feeling and the rapid transitions of his thought. The writer of the Hebrews has a stately manner, showing its cultivation in his most moving utterances. His sentences are rhythmical and balanced, and his words carefully chosen, frequently with a view to a peculiar effect depending on the repetition of sounds, which is lost in translation. (4) The quotations in this Epistle are introduced in a different way from St. Paul's; they are taken from the LXX., commonly

with exactness, and show little or no acquaintance with Hebrew. St. Paul sometimes quotes from the LXX., sometimes translates from the Hebrew, and often relies on his memory. (5) The Epistle shows a familiarity with the Alexandrian tone of thought, and probably with the writings of Philo Judæus. (6) The doctrinal agreement of this Epistle with St. Paul's teaching is commonly admitted, but it differs from his mode of presentation. St. Paul dwells upon the Law and its having become obsolete, not on ceremonial as the counterpart of Christ's priestly work. The conception of Faith in c. xi. is distinct from that of the Faith which justifies without the works of the Law. The prominence which St. Paul gives to the Resurrection of our Lord is not found here, and nothing is said about the admission of the Gentiles to the privileges of Israel. These arguments, which have various degrees of weight, have prevailed with the greater number of the students of the Epistle.

But it would not be fair to an opinion so widely held in former times to dismiss the question without listening to a reply. The argument built on ii. 3, it is said, is not conclusive, for in his speech at Antioch in Pisidia St. Paul speaks in the way which is said to have been impossible (Acts xiii. 31, 32). His fear of being unacceptable to the Hebrews was overcome by his ardent love for his countrymen, but it had the effect of restraining his impetuosity and making him weigh his words, which produces the difference of style. Origen said that there was no sign of that "rudeness of speech" of which the Apostle was conscious (2 Cor. xi. 6). But he is there speaking ironically. He was not ignorant of the rules of rhetoric, though he commonly disregarded them. Here they are purposely observed. Chrysostom, as good a judge of the Apostle's style as Origen, speaks of it enthusiastically. His manner varies according to circumstances in his other Epistles. And from 1 Cor. xiii. all can judge of the refinement which it admitted of when he saw occasion. And the whole difference in the statement of doctrine arises from the peculiarity of his aim in this Epistle. By such considerations as these we might explain to ourselves the facts of the case, if there had been an absolute agreement on the question in antiquity. But as it is, they are commonly not felt to be convincing.

Can we then ascertain the writer? We can only make conjectures. And yet our choice is limited. It must be admitted that, apart from other considerations, the few hints which we have in the tone of authority, together with the consciousness of lying under suspicion (xiii. 18), and the familiar mention of Timothy (xiii. 23), point to no one so naturally as to St. Paul. But if we have to search for some other writer, the fundamental

agreement of the teaching with that of the Apostle, the great intimacy with his language, and what is said about Timothy, lead us to look for him within the circle of St. Paul's companions.

We have seen that in ancient times it was thought by some that Clement of Rome (*Philippians* iv. 3) or St. Luke had translated the Epistle from St. Paul's Hebrew original. But the fancy of its being a version is universally abandoned, as forbidden by the phenomena which its language presents. They were also considered by others to have been its authors. This notion finds little support as regards Clement. But St. Luke's title, not so much as writing independently though full of the thought of St. Paul, as under his direction and superintendence, has been ably maintained. The striking resemblance between the language of the Epistle and St. Luke's writings is the chief evidence. But after allowing for the difference between historical compositions and an argumentative letter, the dissimilarity of style is too great. And the Epistle is evidently written by a fellow-countryman, while it is inferred from *Col. iv. 10—11, 14*, that St. Luke was a Gentile.

Tertullian says that Barnabas was the author. Several circumstances are in favour of this. He was a Levite of Cyprus, and consequently an Hellenist, but also an early member of the Church at Jerusalem, which might account for the relations existing between the writer and that Church, if it be the one addressed, see *xiii. 18—19, 23*. We should not, however, expect him, being probably older than St. Paul (cf. *Acts ix. 36—37*; *vii. 58*), to be writing after his death. Nor are we prepared by what we read of him to find the peculiar ability, or the Alexandrine culture which appear in the Epistle. But these are negative considerations; and the confident way in which Tertullian speaks produces the impression that he was not expressing an individual opinion, but the view which was current in Africa and at Rome.

The most attractive suggestion, however, is that of Luther, who fixed upon Apollos. In *Acts xviii. 24—28*, we read that he was a Jew, an Alexandrian by race, eloquent or learned, and mighty in the Scriptures; and that he mightily convinced the Jews at Corinth, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ. The character of his work there was such that a party was formed which looked on him as their head (see *1 Cor. i.—iv*). They were probably drawn to him by that literary training and style of thought which he brought from Alexandria. His intimacy with St. Paul appears in *1 Cor. xvi. 12*; *Titus iii. 13*. And the former of these passages is thought to contain proof of his

modesty and considerateness in avoiding all appearance of encouraging the divisions at Corinth; which agrees well with the reserve of the writer of the Hebrews, who contented himself with those personal references which were enough at the time, but have left posterity in doubt. None of St. Paul's friends seem to fulfil so well the required conditions.

2. *The Persons Addressed; Date and Place of Writing.*—Apart from the Title, we have to gather from the Epistle itself that it was written to Jews. At first sight it might be thought to be addressed to all believers of that nation; but we see from xiii. 17—19, 23, that some particular Church is intended. But which was it? It seems impossible to give a decided answer. The absence of all reference to Gentile Christians, the danger of apostasy owing to the attraction of the Jewish ritual, and the familiarity with it which it implied, lead our thoughts naturally to the Church of Jerusalem. And this suits fairly well with the mention of a persecution (xii. 3—13) which was not so severe as an earlier one (x. 32—34, cf. Acts viii. 1—3). But the ministering to the saints (vi. 10) hardly agrees with the poverty of the Church of Jerusalem. And no follower of St. Paul, so far as we know, was on such intimate terms with it, except perhaps St. Barnabas, or was in a position to address such reproofs to the Mother Church. And why, on this supposition, should the language of the Epistle be Greek, and all quotations made from the Greek version? The Church of Alexandria has been thought of, in connection with Apollos. But we know little of its early history, or its connection with Timothy. And it was here that the tradition of Pauline authorship was the strongest. Analogous difficulties present themselves in the case of Rome, Corinth, or Ephesus.

We must remain equally uncertain as to where it was written. The mention of the release of Timothy and the message, "They of Italy salute you," together with the belief that St. Paul was in prison, but expecting shortly to be set free (xiii. 23—4), suggested that it was written at Rome. On the theory of a different authorship every clue is lost.

Its date cannot have been early (see v. 12; x. 32; xiii. 7, Rev. Ver.). It must have been written after St. Paul's death and the release of Timothy (who had been probably imprisoned at Rome after obeying St. Paul's summons (see 2 Timothy iv. 9), and before the fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. This is not a necessary inference from the language of the passages in which the Jewish Ceremonial is spoken of as still being carried on, for it might be used in an ideal sense; but after that catastrophe the solemn argument of the Epistle would have been needless.

3. *Object and Character.*—The Epistle is called a “word of exhortation” (xiii. 22). This expresses its aim. The Jewish Christians were suffering persecution, and not only felt its burden, but were cast down by disappointed hopes of the glorious coming of the Lord (x. 36—37); while their unbelieving countrymen were elated with that confidence in the victorious mission of Israel which made them defy the Roman power. They had found the difficulty of dispensing with the external support of the ordinances of the Law. The splendour of its Ritual still impressed them, and all the more from its contrast with the simple worship of the Church. They were at a standstill in spiritual life and intelligence, or rather had gone back (v. 11—12), and gave cause for fearing that they would fall away (vi. 3—8).

Full of his purpose and the sublimity of his subject, the writer puts aside as inopportune all preface and personal allusion, and states the sum of his arguments at the very beginning, compressing it into the three first verses. Here he declares the finality of the work on our behalf of Christ, in whom God completed His gradual revelation of Himself, His exalted nature, and the glory which received Him in heaven. In developing his argument he begins with a point of dignity belonging to the Old Covenant in having been introduced by the ministry of angels, which was more prominent in the contemporary Jewish teaching than in the Pentateuch, and shows the superiority of Christ to the angels; which leads to the honour put upon human nature by His assuming it, and the part which suffering has in perfecting the Captain of our salvation in His office, and further to its place in the perfecting of ourselves. The superiority of Christ to Moses, the human agent in the giving of the Old Covenant, is then established.

The third part of the argument is the temporary nature of the Jewish Ceremonial and the Covenant with which it was connected. Old habits of thought made the Hebrew believers feel that a Divine Institution must be permanent. The writer reminds them of its imperfection, and shows that the ideal priesthood belongs to Christ, and that the ideal sanctuary is in heaven. He confirms his teaching by recalling the fact that the Old Testament prepared them for a new covenant (viii. 8—12; Jeremiah xxxi. 31—34), and for a new form of priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm cx. 4). He was a relic of the combination in one person of the offices of king and priest, which was found elsewhere in simple times (compare, “*Rex Anius, rex idem hominum Phœbique sacerdos.*”—Virg., *Æn.* iii. 80). It seemed fitting at one time that the king, who was a representative of

God's government, should also personate his subjects in their atonements and thanksgivings. But the inability of one man to discharge such weighty offices led to their separation. Yet absolutely it was the higher order of things, and so in Abraham, the forefather of the Levitical priests, "the less was blessed of the greater." Many hundred years after this event the Psalmist set before his countrymen in the person of Melchizedek the type of that higher order which was to be restored, when the inadequacy of the ceremonial ministration of Aaron's sons should be replaced by a true priest, and misrule should come to an end under a true king, both titles meeting in the person of Messiah. As the meaning of this type was not obvious, it is elaborately explained, more stress being laid on the perpetuity of Melchizedek's priesthood than on his kingly office. The tendency of all this was to establish their hearts. The inherent completeness of Christ only needed the experience of suffering and the discipline of obedience. Thus perfected, He sat on God's right hand. And He makes His brethren perfect by the one offering of Himself and by His help. But they must be content to suffer in faith and patience that they may receive the recompense of the reward.

The writer's practical object is never lost sight of. A trace of this is seen in the way in which he confines his words to the Hebrews. In ii. 6—16 the broader prospect which the Incarnation opens (9, 14) is narrowed to the seed of Abraham; and the width of meaning which those words had gained, so as to include the Gentiles, though doubtless present to his own mind, is nowhere brought forward.

The argument, it will be noticed, is directed to Christian Jews, not to those who were unconverted. The Incarnation and the facts of our Lord's life on earth are taken for granted. This has to be remembered in reading some of the passages cited from the Old Testament, *e.g.* i. 5; ii. 12, 13. They are adduced on the principle that its full meaning is found in Christ. We may mention further that some of the quotations, *e.g.* ii. 7; x. 5; xii. 26, are adapted to the purpose for which they are cited only in the form in which they appear in the LXX.

Some apparent inaccuracies, such as in ix. 2—4 (where the altar of incense is omitted, or more probably is intended by the word which is translated "censer," in which case it is wrongly placed within the veil), have been regarded as signs of a want of familiarity with particulars. But this can hardly be a case of ignorance. It is more likely that, in accordance with his habit of looking at things in their higher relations, the writer associates the altar of incense with the Holy of Holies, to which it

belonged symbolically more than to the Holy Place. In the same manner he speaks only of the Tabernacle, never hinting at the existence of the Temple. He cleaves to the idea, and dis-regards departures from it.

4. *Analysis.*

i. 1—3. *God's successive revelations completed in His Son.*

4—ii. 18. *Superiority of Christ to the Angels.*—Shown by a comparison of God's language to Him and them, 4—14. Warning, ii. 1—4. Shown in God's subjection of all things to man, 5—16. First mention of Christ as High Priest, 17—18.

iii. 1—6. *Superiority of Christ to Moses.*

7—iv. 13. *Warning.*—Not to imitate the unbelief of Israel in old time, and so fail to enter into rest, 7—19; the promise of which is unfulfilled, iv. 1—8. It is a Sabbath rest like God's, 9—11. Disobedience cannot escape detection, 12—13.

iv. 14—x. 18. *Superiority of Christ's Priesthood.*—Hortatory, 14—16. Characteristics of a high priest, v. 1—4. The last of them illustrated in Christ. First mention of Melchizedek, 5—10. Digression, in which they are rebuked for dulness of hearing, 11—vi. 20. Explanation of the type of Melchizedek, vii. 1—28. Christ is the ideal Priest, viii. 1—13. The non-ideal nature of the Tabernacle and the Old Covenant, ix. 1—x. 18.

19—xiii. 17. *Exhortation and Warning.*—Having a new and living way to draw near to God and to hold fast their profession, and to remember the former times, 19—39. Examples of Faith xi. 1—40. Exhortation, xii. 1—17. Contrast between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion, *i.e.* the heavenly Jerusalem, 18—29. Miscellaneous exhortations, xiii. 1—17.

18—25. *Conclusion.*—The writer asks their prayers that he may be restored to them, 18—19; he prays for them. Doxology, 20—21. He begs them to bear the word of exhortation, 22. The release of Timothy, and a promise to come to them; salutations, 23—24.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

1. *The Seven Catholic Epistles.*—Next in order to the Epistles of St. Paul and that to the Hebrews come the General or Catholic Epistles. By these terms were meant in the first instance circular Epistles, *i.e.* such as were intended for more than one Church. Thus understood they are inapplicable to 1 and 2 John. But Eusebius, who is the first to use the word “Catholic” in reference to all the seven, appears to mean that they were in common use in the Church, which sense is appropriate to the whole of them. They are ascribed to James, Peter, John, and Jude, who with the exception of the last, are described by St. Paul as men “who seemed to be pillars” (Gal. ii. 9).

Each of these three, as well as St. Paul, represented different modes of apprehending our Lord and His work, and took distinct parts in building up the Church. And the proof of this is found in their writings. That there should be this variety in their contributions to one common end will not surprise us, when we remember that while St. Paul was “a chosen vessel” to carry Christ’s name to the Gentiles, St. John stood in a tender personal relation to Him, and St. Peter received from Him, when he was in His presence for the first time, a name which embodied His foresight of the work which he was to do in the early days of the Church.

2. *The Epistle of James. The Writer.*—The first of these general Epistles is that of James, a place which it occupied in the time of Eusebius. Its author must have been one of the three men of that name who are mentioned in the New Testament—James, the son of Zebedee, brother of John, and one of the apostles; another apostle, James, the son of Alphæus; and James, the Lord’s brother. There is an almost universal consent that the first is excluded by the early date of his martyrdom (Acts xii. 2). The last two have been very commonly regarded as one and the same person. But this view is now very generally given up. The question is intricate, and is fully discussed in the study on Jude, to which the reader is referred.

(i.) If, then, we distinguish James, the son of Alphæus, from James, the Lord’s brother, which of them wrote this Epistle? Its

tone of authority, not expressed but implied, points to the more conspicuous of them. This was the Lord's brother, who appears as chief in authority in the Church of Jerusalem in the latter part of the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistle to the Galatians. On the other hand, no separate mention of the son of Alphæus, any more than of the greater part of the apostles, occurs after that which is found in Acts i. 13. Still we may ask, if the writer was the brother of the Lord, why he does not give himself that title. The answer seems to be that, in the spirit of the words recorded in Matt. xii. 48—50, Luke xi. 27—28, he placed himself on the level of all those who served the risen and ascended Jesus. In the same way Jude, another of our Lord's brethren, is contented to call himself the "servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James."

(ii.) The names of these brethren of the Lord were James, Joses, Simon, and Judas (Matt. xii. 55), where his sisters are also mentioned, but not by name. What we read further of them in the New Testament may be stated thus. They accompanied Jesus, His mother, and His disciples, to Capernaum (John ii. 12); they did not believe in Him (John vii. 2—9); and this is confirmed by St. Mark's statement (iii. 21), that His friends, *i.e.* His brethren and mother (see verse 31), "went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, He is beside Himself."

(iii.) We may stop here to inquire what was the nature of their relationship. The natural inference from the way in which they are spoken of is that they were brothers in the strict sense, sons of Joseph and Mary. This opinion was held by a few respectable names in antiquity, and has its supporters at the present day. It was the leading tenet of a sect who were branded as heretics in consequence, but its most prominent defender was Helvidius, a Roman lawyer, A.D. 383. He was attacked by St. Jerome with unmerited fierceness, for he did not wish to dishonour the Lord's mother, but to uphold the sanctity of marriage.

Jerome himself originated the view that "brethren" meant kinsmen, or, more definitely, "cousins," the sons of Alphæus and the sister of the Lord's mother. This met with immediate approval, and became the prevailing interpretation for centuries, displacing the more ancient one, that they were sons of Joseph by a former wife, the chief supporter of which was Epiphanius. The question is one which raises strong and even passionate feeling, but there is one matter of fact which has not perhaps been attended to enough.

When our Lord was upon the cross He entrusted His mother, not to any of His brethren, but to St. John. It is not probable that He would have done so if they had been her own sons. On the other hand, the close connection with her in which they are constantly found, and the mention of His sisters also, as well as

the fact that James was known to Josephus as the brother of Jesus, appear to show that Jerome's sense is too remote. The subject cannot be adequately discussed in a few words. It will be found treated in an exhaustive manner in Bishop Lightfoot's edition of the *Galatians*, which has done much to restore to the older view the favour which it lost.

(iv.) Our Lord's Resurrection put an end to His brethren's unbelief, and to James He granted a special appearance (1 Cor. xv. 7). We find them all mentioned, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, as being in close union with the apostles after the Ascension (Acts i. 13—14). In 1 Cor. ix. 5, St. Paul claims the same right to travel with a wife as the brethren of the Lord, or Cephas. The remaining notices relate exclusively to James. We learn from Gal. i. 18, that when St. Paul came to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion, to visit Peter, he saw James at the same time. And in Acts xii. 17, Peter directs that his release from prison should be told to James and the brethren, which points to his holding an official position in the Church at Jerusalem. This appears more clearly later on from the tone and effect of his speech at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 13 *sqq.*, compared with Gal ii. 9—12). The last mention of him is when he and the elders of the Church gave a public reception to Paul at the end of his third apostolical journey (Acts xxi. 18—25).

(v.) It would seem that the apostles made over to him after a time the government of the Church of Jerusalem, for which he was recommended by his relation to the Lord, and by his character and principles. He conformed to the law, sharing no doubt the feeling of the other members of that Church, that the ordinances of the old dispensation had not been done away for them, but were filled out with new life and meaning in Christ. And thus the conformity of which he set the example, joined with the respect which he won from all, seems to have long secured for his Church an immunity from serious persecution. As regards the Gentiles, the liberality of his sentiments is attested by St. Paul, and by his own words (Acts xv. 13—19), while his forethought on behalf of the prejudices of the Jewish Christians is equally shown by the concessions which he proposed on the part of the Gentiles (20—21), and by his inducing St. Paul to give a practical proof that he neither taught the believing Jews "to forsake Moses," nor did so himself (Acts xxi. 20—24).

(vi.) His position, and that of those over whom he presided, was intelligible and lawful, for circumcision and the other ordinances belonged to the national as well as the religious life; but it was destined to cease. As we read the *Acts of the Apostles* our attention is transferred to Antioch as a new centre, and to the

spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles. The mother Church retains the respect due to it, but it is forced by poverty to accept the alms of the converts from the heathen. A further blow was struck by the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. It must have led them to reconsider their position, and have opened their eyes to the transitory character of the Mosaic Law and worship. And their flight to Pella in anticipation of that event marked them out in the eyes of their countrymen as traitors to the national cause. The persecution of them by Barcochab during his rebellion against the Romans, A.D. 132—135, tended to sift them still more. Many abandoned their claim to the privileges on which they had prided themselves, and blended with their brethren of Gentile origin, while the rest took up a sectarian position, and lingered on under the name of Ebionites into the fifth century.

(vii.) Our further information about St. James is derived from a fragment of Hegesippus, the first historian of the Church, *circa* 170, preserved in Eusebius (E. H. ii. 23), and from Josephus. The former tells us that he was called "The Just" by all men, and that "he was holy from his mother's womb. He drank no wine nor strong drink, neither did he eat flesh. No razor ever touched his head; he did not anoint himself with oil; he did not use the bath. He alone was allowed to enter into the holy place. For he wore no wool, but only fine linen. And he would enter into the Temple alone, and be found there kneeling on his knees and asking forgiveness for the people."

There is no reason to doubt the general reverence in which he was held, nor the strict sanctity of his life. He may have been an Ascetic, but there is no trace of it in his Epistle, and his continual intercessions are very probable. But fabulous matter runs through the whole of Hegesippus's account, which he is supposed to have drawn from Ebionite sources. It appears especially in the dramatic narrative of St. James's martyrdom. Owing to the progress of the Gospel the Pharisees became alarmed and placed him on the pinnacle of the Temple at the Passover, in order that he might "persuade the multitude not to go astray after Jesus." But he took the opportunity of confessing Him. The enraged Pharisees threw him down, after which he was stoned, and at length killed by a blow from a fuller's club.

Josephus, who was contemporary, gives a different and more probable account (Antiq. xx. 9. 1), according to which Ananias, the High Priest, brought James, the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, and certain others before the Council on a charge of breaking the law, and ordered them to be stoned to death. He had chosen for this purpose the interval between the death of Festus and the arrival of his successor. But the dissatisfaction which this proceeding caused amongst the most equitable of the

Jews led to complaints against him, which ended in his being displaced from his office. This would fix A.D. 62 as the year of St. James's death. In the Clementines, which are forgeries of the Ebionites, and fathered on Clement of Rome, St. James is termed "Bishop of Bishops," and regarded as practically the head of the whole Church.

3. *Place and Time of Writing*.—St. James would naturally write from Jerusalem; it is in agreement with this that some of the natural phenomena to which he alludes belong particularly to Palestine; such as salt and bitter springs (iii. 11, 12), the early and latter rain (v. 7), and the scorching wind (Rev. Vers. i. 11). He writes "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," or "which are in the Dispersion" (cf. John vii. 35, 1 Pet. i. 1). He addresses only those who are Jews by birth; an incidental mark of this is his giving the name of "synagogue" to the place where they met for worship (ii. 2). There is no hint of the existence of any Christians of heathen origin. We do not know where these communities consisting entirely of Jewish Christians were situated; but we may suppose them to have been partly in Palestine and partly in neighbouring lands, the fruits of intercourse with the Church of Jerusalem at the great festivals, and of the unrecorded labours of the apostles, which must have been confined to their own countrymen. A little before his death, St. James reckoned the number of such believers as amounting to many thousands (Acts xxi. 20).

(i.) This absence of any reference to the Gentiles is probably a proof of the very early date of the Epistle. The grave questions originated by St. Paul's first apostolical journey, which came before the Council of Jerusalem for decision, would seem not to have arisen as yet. It is, at least, difficult to explain the maintenance of such complete silence about the Gentile converts subsequent to those events, especially after they had begun to contribute to the support of their poor brethren in Judæa.

(i.) But we must assign a later date, if the Epistle shows, as many think, an acquaintance with St. Paul's writings. There are several expressions and passages in it which remind us of them strongly, and chiefly of the Romans. The most important are i. 22, cf. Rom. ii. 13; i. 3, Rom. v. 3; iv. 1, Rom. vii. 23. Both the passages in the first pair may probably be a reminiscence of our Lord's words, Matt. vii. 26. And there may be some common source for the two others in the habitual language of the Church (with i. 3, cf. also 1 Pet. i. 7, and with iv. 1, cf. 1 Pet. ii. 11) which we cannot trace.

(iii.) But ii. 14—26, presents more difficulty. Our first impression of this passage is, not only that it is inconsistent with St. Paul's teaching, but that it is intended to correct it or the

abuse of it. This led to Luther's well-known description of the Epistle as "a letter of straw." And in a later and more respectful mention of it, he stated as one of his reasons for not holding it to be the work of an apostle, that it contradicted Paul and all other Scripture in giving righteousness to works. On the other hand, the greater part of the older divines employed themselves in showing the agreement between St. Paul and St. James, in spite of appearances. But more recent inquiry leads to the conclusion that the two teachers were not opposed, because they had different objects in view, while using similar language.

St. James speaks of faith in one God—the distinguishing belief of Israel (ii. 19)—and declares that mere faith will not justify. The error which he opposed was a barren Pharisaic orthodoxy, akin to the reliance on the privilege of being Abraham's seed, which John the Baptist denounced (Matt. iii. 9, cf. Rom. ii. 17—29). We learn from Justin Martyr, in the next century (Dial. c. Tryph., p. 370), that there were Jews in his day, and others like them in this respect (Jewish-minded Christians), who said that "even if men are sinners, but know God, the Lord will not impute sin to them." But St. Paul combated the slighting of God's grace in Christ Jesus, which is ours through faith, on the part of those who looked for justification to their strict observance of the law of Moses.

St. James's rebuke was directed against a trust in a dead faith, which led to no works, "the *opus operatum* of faith;" St. Paul's fell on a trust in self-righteousness. We are apt to look upon St. Paul as the first to give prominence to faith, and the originator of the term "justification;" but there is evidence that these matters were discussed, along with the example of Abraham, before his time, in the Jewish schools, to which both he and St. James were indebted.

(iv.) If this view is right it bears on a question of more importance than the date of the Epistle. We find in it no injunctions as to the observance of ceremonial ordinances. If this was unnecessary owing to the agreement on this point of the writer and his readers, it still shows that it was not regarded as open to attack. This of itself is an objection to the view of the Tübingen school, which imagines that a fierce contest on this subject raged during the life of St. James and long afterwards. But at first sight his teaching about faith gives an encouragement to the idea of an hostility to St. Paul. On further examination this, too, disappears, and there remains nothing to disturb our conception of the fundamental unity of the leaders of the Church, to which we have testimony in Acts xv. and the Galatians.

4. *Character, Style, Quotations.*—The tone of the whole Epistle is practical, earnest, and stern in parts. It was occasioned, no

doubt, by the existence of the faults which he corrects—the results, perhaps, not so much of deterioration as of slow progress. When the law and the Gospel were blended in the convictions of the same person, the latter element may often have been small and its influence shallow. Thus we find warnings against respect for the rich (ii. 6, 7), a barren faith (14—26), forwardness in becoming teachers (iii. 1), bitter language (iii. 9, 10), defamation and uncharitable judgment (iv. 11, 12), fierce contentions and sensuality (iv. 1—3), and dishonest oppression of the poor (v. 1—6). But it may be doubted whether the worst features, such as iv. 2, v. 1—6, belong to members of the Church, and do not rather refer to their unbelieving countrymen, to whose consciences the writer appeals, so far as his words will reach them. There was need, also, of encouragement under trial. The various exhortations are enforced by the solemnity with which St. James looks forward to the Lord's coming.

(i.) There is little of distinctively Christian doctrine. Everything of the kind relates to the conception of our Lord's person in respect of His example (v. 11), authority (i. 1; v. 10), glory (ii. 1), power (v. 14—15); and His coming to judgment (v. 7—9); or to the word of truth, the instrument of a new birth (i. 18, 21). But the Gospel is not named. The rule of the life is the Law, but as advanced by our Lord into a "law of liberty" (ii. 12); itself delivered from the restrictions imposed at first for the hardness of men's hearts, and from narrowing traditions, and bestowing liberty in turn through freedom from sin (cf. John viii. 33—36). No mention occurs, as we have seen, of Jewish ordinances. And, on the other hand, the low value of mere externals is indicated by the fact that in the description of pure religion—the word used refers to the outward aspect of it—all that is ceremonial is omitted, and works of charity and habitual purity take its place. We are reminded throughout of our Lord's teaching as recorded in the three first Gospels, rather than of that side of it which is found in St. John, or the truths revealed after Pentecost.

(ii.) In respect of the organization of the Church, we find mention of elders who are to be summoned to pray for the sick man, and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord (v. 14; cf. Mark vi. 13, xvi. 18). It has been inferred from iii. 1, that no definite arrangement had yet been made for instruction in these Churches.

(iii.) The language is a very pure specimen of Hellenistic Greek. This is what might not have been expected. The style is simple and inartificial. There is little attempt to follow a distinct plan, or develop the connection of thought. The continuity of the whole is the writer's earnestness, culminating in the thoughts which belong to the second advent. From this point of view the

abrupt way in which the Epistle ends, without even a “Fare ye well,” is not inappropriate; it shows the pressure of the expectation under which the appeal is made to save an erring brother while there is time.

(iv.) Among the quotations from the Old Testament, Lev. xix. 18, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” is distinguished by the title of the Royal Law, in consequence, no doubt, of the prominence given to it by our Lord, Matt. xix. 19; xxii. 39. The Book of Proverbs is twice quoted, Prov. iii. 34, in iv. 6, and Prov. x. 12, in v. 20. And it is thought that St. James used the kindred teaching of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, the strongest resemblance being between i. 13 and Ecclus. xv. 11—12. In regard to the New Testament, the echoes of our Lord’s teaching, and particularly of the Sermon on the Mount, are numerous, cf. i. 2, Matt. v. 10—12; i. 4, Matt. v. 48; i. 5, Matt. vii. 7; ii. 13, Matt. vi. 14—15; iii. 17—18, Matt. v. 9: iv. 4, Matt. vi. 24; iv. 11, Matt. vii. 1; v. 2, Matt. vi. 19; v. 10, Matt. v. 12; v. 12, Matt. v. 33; compare also iv. 10, Matt. xxiii. 12; iv. 12, Matt. x. 28; iv. 9, Luke vi. 25. The passages which seem parallel with others in St. Paul have been spoken of above. The quotations from the Proverbs are found again in 1 Peter v. 6, iv. 8, with the same deviations from the LXX. The resemblance between i. 12 and Rev. ii. 10 has been accounted for by the supposition of an unwritten saying of our Lord underlying both passages.

5. *Authenticity.*—Eusebius quotes the Epistle, but places it among the books which were disputed, but acknowledged by most (E. H. iii. 25), and he says (E. H. ii. 23), that not many of the ancients mentioned it. We find accordingly that the first who speaks of it by name is Origen (c. 230), who quotes it sometimes, and in one place as the Epistle “current” as that of James. Before him, traces of its use are only found in Irenæus and the Shepherd of Hermas, which brings us to the middle of the second century. It was accepted early by the Syrian Church, and included in their version. It had not apparently a place in the Old Latin, nor is it named in the Muratorian Canon. After the time of Eusebius the recognition of it kept extending, and it ranks with the other books of the New Testament in the Canon of the Third Council of Carthage, A.D. 397. In the fifth century it was universally acknowledged.

The critics of the present day, who supposed it to have been written in the name of St. James after his death, mostly belong to the Tübingen school. To what has been said in reply to them already in section 3, we may add that the silence about the controversy in respect of circumcision may indeed be accounted for by supposing that the Epistle was written after it had entirely ceased, as well as before it began. But if so, how late are we

to place it to suit their theory, according to which a serious struggle was carried on till the latter part of the second century? Most of its readers, impressed by the feeling of genuineness which it conveys, will not be ready to challenge the judgment of the Church.

6. *Analysis.*

i. 1. *The Greeting.*

2—18. *The subject of Trial (Temptation and Affliction).*

(a) 2—12. The joy, blessing, and reward of enduring trial. Trial to be accounted joy, as working endurance, which must have a perfect work, in order that ye may lack nothing, 2—4. One such lacking may be that of wisdom. Pray for it without wavering, 5—8. The circumstances of Christian life break down the differences of wealth and station. Under persecution and temptation the lowly who endures should rejoice in his spiritual exaltation, and the wealthy in his humiliation; thus both are brought to the common ground of obedience, 9—11. Blessing and reward of enduring, 12.

(b) 13—15. No one should yield to temptation on the plea that it comes from God.

(c) 16—18. Further refutation of this idea. All good is God's gift, and in Him is no change (so that He should send us what is evil), 16—17. Of his own will He begat us, by the (regenerating) word of truth to be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures, 18.

19—27. *Rules arising out of the preceding.*—To realise this dignity let every man be swift to hear . . . putting away filthiness . . . and welcoming the implanted word, 19—21; of which you must be doers and not hearers only, 22—25. Tests of reality. An unbridled tongue a proof of its absence. What pure religion is, 26—27.

ii. *Faith.*

1—13. *Faith in connection with respect of persons.*—Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, not to be held in company with respect of persons, 1. Illustration of such respect, 2—4. God makes choice of the poor whom ye dishonour, 5—6a. The treatment of you by the rich deprives them of a claim upon you, 6b—7. The right course is to obey the Royal Law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," which is inconsistent with respect of person. For failure in one point (which this is) is breach of the whole law, 8—13.

14—26. *Necessity of the union of Faith and Works.*—Inutility of faith without works, 14—17. Reply to the speaker in the fourteenth verse, 18—19. The case of Abraham, 20—24; of Rahab, 25. Faith without works is dead, 26.

iii. *Wisdom.*

1—12. *Wisdom in reference to the conceit of it.*—Ambition to

become teachers is dangerous in case of stumbling, 1. One of the chief occasions is forwardness to speak. The man who stumbles not with his tongue is perfect, 2. The importance of it is not to be measured by its size. Bridles and rudders are instances of the power of small things, 3—4; so the tongue is small but boastful, 5a. Another instance is the great conflagration which is kindled by a little fire, 5b. The defiling and inflammatory character of the tongue, 6; which is less tameable than wild beasts, 7—8. The inconsistency of blessing God and cursing man is opposed to the analogy of natural things, as a fountain, fig-tree, and vine, 9—12.

13—18. *True Wisdom*.—The works of a good life done in the meekness of wisdom, are a proof of its presence, as jealousy and envy are of its absence, 13—14. These last are not the wisdom from above, the description of which follows, 15—18.

iv. *Carnal-mindedness and Presumption*.

1—10. *Source of their contentions*.—These come from fleshly pleasures, 1. Ye desire and strive to satisfy your wants by violence, which after all is in vain. Prayer would secure their supply, but not your prayer; because its aim is to spend the results on your pleasures, 2—3. This is (spiritual) adultery, forsaking God's friendship for the world, which His jealousy will not permit, 4—6. Exhortation to submission and change of life and feeling, 7—10.

11—12. *Against Presumption in slandering and judging*.—The man who judges his brother sets himself above the law (which forbids it), 11. There is only one law-giver and judge, 12.

13—17. *Carnal confidence*.—The forming of plans without reference to the uncertainty of life, 13—14; and to the will of God, 15; a presumption in which ye glory, 16—17.

v. *The Lord's Coming*.

1—6. *Against rich oppressors*.—The calamities coming on them, 1. The decay which attacks their treasures, 2—3. God hears the cry of the labourers whom they defraud, 4. Their luxury, injustice, and violence, while punishment is impending, 5—6.

7—18. *Encouragements and directions*.—Duty of patience till the Lord's coming, which is nigh, after the example of the husbandman who waits for the early and later rain, 7—8. Murmur not against one another—the judge stands before the door. Consider the example of the prophets, Job, and the end of the Lord, 9—11. Patience shown in forbearing to swear, 12. Affliction to be met with prayer, as cheerfulness is to be consecrated with songs of thanksgiving, 13. The healing of sickness to be sought in the ministry of the elders, and in mutual confession and prayer. Example of Elias.

19—20. *An urgent appeal to reclaim an erring brother*.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

1. *The Writer.*—The author of this Epistle is St. Peter. He belonged originally to Bethsaida, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. His name was Simon, or Simeon, Acts xv. 14; cf. 2 Pet. i. 1; and his father's Jonas (the Greek form of Jonah), Matt. xvi. 17, or John, John i. 42; xxi. 15—17 (Rev. Ver.). He received the name Cephas, an Aramaic word meaning "Rock," translated by the Greek "Petros," from our Lord when he was brought to Him by his brother Andrew, who was a disciple of John the Baptist, and heard his testimony to Jesus (John i. 36—43). Both of these became disciples of Christ (John ii. 2), but they were not at first permanently attached to Him, but continued their occupations of fishermen (cf. Matt. iv. 18—20; Mark i. 16). It was not until the miraculous draught of fishes (Luke v. 2—11) that they finally abandoned their trade.

It is unnecessary to go through St. Peter's history minutely. It will be enough to recall some of its incidents and the features of his character—his impetuous nature (Luke v. 8; John xviii. 10, xxi. 7); his forwardness in being the spokesman of his brethren, as in his refusal to quit Jesus (John vi. 68), in his confession of Him as the Christ (Matt. xvi. 15—16), and in his rebuke of Him when He foretold His sufferings, emphasized by the hand he laid on Him as he spoke (Matt. xvi. 22); the inconstancy and timidity which humbled his zealous confidence when he went to Jesus on the water (Matt. xiv. 28—31), and protested that he would never be offended in Him (Matt. xxvi. 33).

Along with the sons of Zebedee he was admitted to behold the raising of Jairus's daughter and the Transfiguration. It was their sympathy which our Lord sought during His agony in the garden. But Peter was distinguished beyond the other two. The name which Jesus gave him (John i. 42) was prophetic, and its significance was declared at the time of his confession. If the dignity of being the Rock on which the Church was to be built must be reserved for Him whom Peter had confessed, still his office of giving solidity to the Church is recognised in the words, "Thou

art Peter ;" and his special responsibility in receiving the keys of the kingdom of heaven is then marked, as elsewhere (Matt. xviii. 18), the power of the Apostles collectively to loose and bind. Peter had been the leading disciple, and he was encouraged to continue to be so by our Lord's charge, " And do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren " (Luke xxii. 32—Rev. Ver.).

Jesus appeared to him separately on the day of His resurrection (Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5). What passed at that solemn meeting we are not told, but it must have been a reinstal of Peter after his denial. And subsequently he received a commission once more, " Feed my lambs, feed my sheep " (John xxi. 15—17).

Accordingly, we find him the chief figure in the early part of the history of the Church. It was his proposal to fill up the vacant place in the Apostolic College (Acts i. 15—26). He is the speaker on the Day of Pentecost (ii. 1—41), and again to the multitude after the healing of the lame man, and to the Council before which he and John were summoned in consequence of that miracle (iii. 1—iv. 22); and when all the Apostles were arrested (v. 29—32); and in the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira (v. 1—11). The sick were brought into the street that even his shadow might fall on them (v. 15). He and John were delegated by the Apostles to visit Samaria, where Philip had made many converts; and Simon asked him to sell the power of bestowing the Holy Ghost (viii. 14—24).

In the rest enjoyed by the Churches of Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria they were visited by him, his stay at Lydda being marked by the healing of *Æneas*, and at Joppa by his raising Dorcas to life (ix. 31—43). Here, too, he had the vision which prepared him for obeying the summons to Cæsarea from Cornelius, and for recognising without reserve the indication of God's will in the gift of the Holy Ghost to him and his household. " Can any man," he said, " forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ? " (x. 1—48). He was not the first to admit a Gentile into the Church. Philip had not hesitated to baptize the eunuch without the authorization which Peter, it may be, would have needed (viii. 36—39). But the case of Cornelius was more important. The notice of the Church was called to it, and Peter had to defend his conduct on his return to Jerusalem. His plea was that he had followed God's guidance. And for the fact of the gift of the Holy Ghost to men uncircumcised he appealed to the testimony of the six brethren who accompanied him to Cæsarea, and whom he had prudently brought with him to Jerusalem. The Church

thankfully acquiesced in what had been done (xi. 1—18). But it was not followed up, and St. Peter's ministry was still directed to the circumcision (Gal. ii. 7, 8). The effect lay dormant.

The object of Paul's going to Jerusalem three years after his conversion was to visit Peter, but both he and James suspected him of wishing to acquaint himself with the affairs of the Church in order to betray it to the rulers of the Jews, till Barnabas overcame their doubt (Acts ix. 26—30; Gal. i. 18—24).

The next event was his deliverance by the angel from prison and the death which Herod designed for him, after which "he departed and went into another place" (Acts xii. 1—17). We do not know how he was employed in the interval between this and the Council held at Jerusalem after St. Paul's first apostolical journey. A comparison of Acts xv. 6—29, with Gal. ii. 1—10, shows not only the hearty support received by St. Paul on that occasion from James, Peter, and John, which he had taken pains to secure, but the wisdom with which all the proceedings were conducted. There was a party consisting of men who had been Pharisees which insisted on the necessity of circumcision and the keeping of the law on the part of the Gentiles admitted into the Church. The matter was discussed by speakers on both sides. Then Peter arose, and referring to his own history in connection with Cornelius, said that the question was one which God had Himself decided "a good while ago." He appealed to them not to lay a yoke on the Gentiles which they themselves were unable to bear; and reminded them that both Jews and Gentiles had one and the same hope of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. His words produced a silence. Barnabas and Paul followed, not discussing the matter on its merits, which might have had an exasperating effect, but describing the approval which God had given them in the miracles which He wrought by them among the heathen. Then James spoke, treating Peter's reference to Cornelius as decisive, and showing that this was in agreement with the teaching of the Prophets. He ended by giving his decision not to "trouble" the Gentiles, but to call on them to abstain from certain things which, with the exception of fornication, were not matters of necessity, but of policy. This council was held *circa* A.D. 52, and there is no further mention of St. Peter in the Acts of the Apostles.

Not long afterwards he went to Antioch. At first he conformed to the practice of that Church, and ate with the Gentiles. But certain men came there from James. The expression seems to imply that they had some kind of commission from him. Many members of the Church of Jerusalem were likely to have less wisdom and liberality than its head, and these men seem to have

imitated the conduct of others of their brethren on a previous occasion (Acts xv. 1—24), expressing disapproval of what they witnessed. Peter, out of fear of them, separated himself from the Gentiles, as did all the other Jewish members of the Church of Antioch, and even Barnabas. St. Paul speaks of their "hypocrisy," as acting in opposition to their own convictions. And he charged Peter with his inconsistency in the presence of them all. "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal. ii. 10—14). He does not tell us the effect of his rebuke, but we can hardly doubt that it was successful, for Peter had acted against his own principles. "He stood condemned" (Rev. Ver.).

It was not the first instance of his yielding to fear, nor of his swift repentance. In his legendary history these traits continue to the end. Yielding to the entreaties of the faithful at Rome to flee from the death which threatened him, he was said to have left the city. He met the Saviour on the Appian Way bearing His cross. "Lord, whither goest thou?" he said. The answer was, "To Rome, to be crucified again." Peter turned, went back weeping, and faced his death. The scene of the story was formerly marked by the church of *Sancta Maria ad passus*, but now by one which is called *Domine, quo vadis?* St. Paul mentions him again as regarded by a party in the Corinthian Church as their head (1 Cor. i. 12; cf. iii. 22); and as commonly accompanied in his journeys by his wife (1 Cor. ix. 5).

The rest of his history is uncertain, except that we may feel sure that the division of labour described in Gal. ii. 7—9, by which it was arranged that Paul should go to the Gentiles and Peter and the others to the circumcision, was in the main respected. What light is to be derived from 1 Pet. v. 13, will be seen below. We are left to traditional accounts which are to some extent untrustworthy. According to the statement commonly received in old times, he was Bishop of Antioch for five years. This is not credible if we consider the origin and character of that Church (Acts xi. 19—26; xiii. 1—3; xv. 1—2). It appears to have been suggested by his visit mentioned by St. Paul in the Galatians. After that he was said to have preached to the Jews, to whom he writes in this epistle (Euseb. E. H. iii. 1); but it contains no signs of his being known to them personally.

The Church of Corinth also seems to have claimed him as a joint founder with St. Paul, according to the letter of its Bishop Dionysius, which he wrote to the Romans in the time of their Bishop Soter, A.D. 168—176 (Euseb. E. H. ii. 26). This may be derived from 1 Cor. i. 10; and he could not have had a hand in

founding the Church, of which St. Paul was the spiritual father (1 Cor. iv. 5). Yet the memory of a residence of his at Corinth may have been preserved in that Church. But Rome was said to have been the chief scene of his labours. He went there in the second year of Claudius to oppose Simon Magus, who had turned heresiarch, and became the first bishop, holding the see during the last twenty-five years of his life. The story of his contest with Simon Magus at Rome is derived by Eusebius (E. H. ii. 15) from Justin Martyr. The probable origin of it was shown in a remarkable way. Justin had appealed, for the proof of Simon's visit to the capital and his powers of imposture, to the fact that a statue dedicated to him as a god, *Simoni Deo Sancto*, was to be seen in the island of the Tiber. Here, in 1574, a statue was discovered bearing the name of the Sabine deity, *Semo Sancus*. St. Peter's foundation of the Roman Church and long episcopate are inconsistent with what we know from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans and the account in the Acts of the Apostles of his first imprisonment. Strictly speaking, neither St. Paul nor St. Peter founded that Church, whose origin is unknown. But St. Paul's influence was so great that he might be called one of its founders; and if St. Peter spent any time there, there would be good reason for speaking of him in the same way.

The account of St. Peter's death in its fullest form was that he suffered at Rome under Nero on the same day with St. Paul, being crucified with his head downwards (the first authority for this is Origen in Euseb. E. H. iii. 1), obtaining this favour as unworthy of the position in which his Master died. St. Paul, on the other hand, was beheaded as a Roman citizen. The tradition was expressed in the Mediæval couplet :—

“Ense coronatur Paulus, cruce Petrus, eodem
Sub duce, luce, loco ; dux Nero, Roma locus.”

The manner of his death is alluded to in John xxi. 18, and Clement, who was Bishop of Rome, in the letter which he wrote to the Corinthians about the end of the first century, gives early testimony to his martyrdom. There is no good reason for rejecting the tradition that it took place at Rome, though some of the circumstances may be picturesque additions. From the middle of the second century onwards this was the account universally received, and it would seem to have been handed on by the earlier age. There is no trace of any other place having claimed to be the scene of his death, whereas Caius, a Roman presbyter, writing just after the end of the second century, speaks of being able to point to the “trophies” of the two Apostles, which must mean some kind of monument, one on the Vatican, the other on the road to Ostia.

There is no complete proof of St. Peter ever having been at Rome. But a personal relation on his part to that Church is implied at as early a date as that of Ignatius's letter to it, *circa* 107, in chap. iv. And there must have been some ground for a tradition which was undisputed in antiquity. It has been conjectured that the part claimed for St. Peter as well as St. Paul in the foundation of the Roman Church is to be explained by the supposed existence of two churches side by side, the one Gentile, and the other Jewish, the latter being formed of such as withdrew after St. Paul's arrival (cf. Phil. i. 15—18, with Col. iv. 11); and that these Churches stood in a near relation to St. Paul and St. Peter respectively. The harmony between the two Apostles would tend in the direction of reunion, which was completed before the end of the century in the time of Clement.

2. *To whom Written.*—The Epistle is addressed to “the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (Rev. Ver.). This would prepare us for finding that Jewish Christians are alone contemplated. But as the Churches in three, at least, of these countries were mainly founded by St. Paul, the Jewish element must have been the smaller; and it seems unlikely that St. Peter would address one portion of them only. And, in fact, passages such as ii. 9—10; iv. 2—4, according to the Revised Version (cf. i. 14, 18; iii. 6) are more applicable to Christians of Gentile origin. St. Peter regards these converts as adopted into the true Israel, and includes them in the sojourners of the Dispersion. It is plain from his beseeching them “as strangers and pilgrims to abstain from fleshly lusts” (ii. 11) that the position of all God's servants on earth, and absent from their true home, is in his mind (cf. Ps. xxxix. 12; cxix. 19).

In his exhortations against heathen vices (ii. 11, 16), retaliation and reviling (iii. 8—12), and the love of gain and power on the part of the elders (v. 2—3), he may have aimed at faults among them which had come to his knowledge. Another motive was their encouragement under the trials to which they were exposed, and to fortify them against the severer persecution which was impending. A third purpose is hinted at rather than fully expressed: “I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand” (v. 12). The exhortations meet us everywhere. The testimony seems confined to this passage, while its importance is marked by its place at the end. He wished, apparently, to dissociate himself from sympathy with Judaizers, and to express his agreement with St. Paul. These Churches were not of his own planting, and he wished to give his witness to the truth of the teaching which they had received from his brother Apostle, in the

letter which he sent by Silvanus, his fellow-worker in those very regions.

It is in keeping with the modesty with which this purpose is intimated that, in addressing the elders, he simply styles himself their "fellow-elder" (v. 1), and that the whole of the personal allusions to himself are contained in that same verse.

It has been assumed that Silvanus (v. 12) is the same as Silas, one of the two members of the Church of Jerusalem who were sent to Antioch along with Paul and Barnabas as independent witnesses to the decision of the Council (Acts xv. 22—35), and who was St. Paul's companion in his second apostolical journey (Acts xv. 40—xviii. 5). His name has here the same form as St. Paul uses (1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 19), of which the other is an abbreviation. The mention of him as "our faithful brother as I account *him*" (Rev. Ver.), cannot have been intended to hint the slightest degree of doubt, but expressed in a delicate manner the agreement of the writer's estimate with that which he knew to exist in the minds of his readers.

The salutation sent from "Marcus, my son" (v. 13) may be, as some think, that of a son of the Apostle of whom we read nowhere else. But it is more likely that the term of affection implies one who was as a son to him, and that John Mark is meant, to whose mother's house St. Peter went when released from the prison (Acts xii. 12). He was cousin or nephew of Barnabas (Col. iv. 10), and started with St. Paul and him on their first apostolical journey, but left them at Perga, in Pamphylia (Acts xiii. 13). St. Paul's refusal to take him in the next journey caused a breach of friendship between him and Barnabas (Acts xv. 38—39); but many years afterwards we find St. Paul anxious for his society (2 Tim. iv. 11). According to Papias and Clement of Alexandria, he was also closely connected with St. Peter as his follower (Euseb. E. H. ii. 15) and "interpreter" (iii. 39); by which was meant that St. Mark's Gospel was the record of what he had heard from the Apostle.

The idea that the Mark here mentioned was St. Peter's own son is connected with the salutation immediately preceding. The Revised Version aims at giving the ambiguity of the original, "She that is in Babylon elect together with *you* saluteth you." If this be an elect sister it must be Peter's wife. But in this case the mode of expression is unnatural. There can be little doubt that the Syriac and Vulgate are right in understanding it of the Church in Babylon.

3. *Date and Place of Writing.*—The fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, probably marks the time before which the Epistle was written, for after that break-up of the home of the Jewish race the term "dispersion" (i. 1) would lose much of its meaning. But the

precise date cannot be fixed. The mention of persecution only helps us to a certain degree. The circumstances of these Christians of Asia Minor were those of unpopularity and ill-treatment; but the trial was not severe as yet, though it was about to become so. It was this unpopularity of the Christians at Rome which tempted Nero to turn aside from himself on to them the suspicion of having set fire to the city. St. Peter may have written in the foresight of what was coming, though there had been no example as yet on a great scale. In this case, we may place the writing of the Epistle a short time before the Neronian persecution in A.D. 64. On the other hand, though there is no evidence that this persecution extended to the provinces, it is likely that the example set at Rome would not be forgotten. And St. Peter may have had in view the approach of persecution resulting from it.

The mention of Mark is some guide to us. He was with St. Paul at Rome during his first imprisonment, A.D. 61—63, but was about to go into Asia Minor (Col. iv. 10). Some years later, during his second imprisonment (*circa* 67 or 68), the Apostle wished Timothy to bring him when he came to him (2 Tim. iv. 11). In this interval we may place Mark's visit to Peter (v. 13) and the writing of the Epistle. And it cannot be later if we adopt the traditional account of his death. But those who do not feel themselves bound by it, and who think that he could not have written to Churches in which St. Paul's authority was chiefly recognised during his lifetime, refer it to some time later than his death.

St. Peter wrote from Babylon (v. 12), but it has been a matter of dispute whether the old capital of the Chaldeans is meant, which, though ruined and going to complete decay, still contained a large population, in which there were many Jews; or whether Rome is intended, the mystical Babylon, an interpretation as old as Papias (Euseb. E. H. ii. 15). There is no doubt that this is the meaning in Rev. xiv. 8; xvi. 19 *al.* But such a use of the word is as suitable to the character of that book as it seems unsuitable here. But whether St. Peter's presence so far to the East was only a visit, or belonged to a residence of greater length, we are unable to determine.

4. *Style and Character.*—The topics follow each other in no premeditated order, and the successive thoughts belonging to them often seem suggested by the one next before. But the whole form of the Epistle has a great likeness to those of St. Paul. We see it in the greeting at the beginning, followed by an introductory passage of some length (i. 3—12), in the salutation at the end, and the doxologies (iv. 11; v. 11). But the similarity does not stop here. The phraseology is frequently

that of St. Paul. And there can be little doubt that some passages are quotations from his writings or influenced by a recollection of them. This is particularly the case in regard to the Epistle to the Romans. Compare ii. 6—7, Romans ix. 33, where there are the same departures from the LXX. in quoting two passages of Isaiah ; i. 14, Rom. xii. 2 ; ii. 2, Rom. xii. 1 ; ii. 13—14, Rom. xiii. 1—5 ; iv. 1—2, Rom. vi. 7 *sqq.* ; iv. 10—11, Rom. xii. 6—8. Compare also ii. 16, Gal. v. 13 ; v. 12, 1 Cor. xv. 1. It may be, though this is less clear, that an acquaintance is shown with Epistles of St. Paul written during his first imprisonment, cf. i. 10—12, Eph. iii. 9—11 ; iii. 22, Eph. i. 20—22 ; ii. 4—6, Eph. ii. 20—22 ; iii. 4, Eph. iii. 16 ; iii. 19—20, Eph. iv. 8—10 ; or even later, if iii. 3 is connected with 1 Tim. ii. 9.

There are coincidences of expression also with the Epistle of James, cf. i. 6—7, James i. 3 ; ii. 1, James i. 21 ; ii. 11, James iv. 1 ; iii. 14, iv. 14, James i. 12, 25 ; iv. 8, James v. 12 ; v. 6, James iv. 10. And there are three quotations common to both : Isa. xl. 6—8. in i. 24, James i. 10—11 ; Prov. iii. 34, in v. 5, James iv. 6 ; Prov. x. 12, in iv. 8, James v. 20. In the last instance there is the same abandonment of the LXX. for a rendering in accordance with the Hebrew. This list of references would be very largely increased if we were to point out the influence of our Lord's words preserved both in the synoptical Gospels and St. John. But it is worth while to notice resemblances between the Epistle and St. Peter's speeches in the Acts of the Apostles, cf. i. 17, Acts x. 34 ; i. 20, Acts ii. 23, iii. 18 ; i. 21, Acts ii. 32—36 ; iii. 15, iv. 10 ; ii. 4, Acts iv. 11 ; ii. 8, Acts i. 16, cf. 25 ; iii. 18, Acts iii. 14.

We might expect to find the Apostle's language deeply coloured by the Old Testament and the words of our Lord. And it is interesting to notice how far that source of influence extends. Thus, we might at first sight be disposed to derive the expression, "that they may be gained" (iii. 1) from 1 Cor. ix. 19—20; but our Lord's words (Matt. xviii. 15) are the original source in both cases. But the familiarity shown by St. Peter with the thoughts and words of St. Paul comes on us as a surprise. We must remember that he was the great letter-writer as well as the great teacher. In the enforcing of what was contained in his Gospel, as he termed it (Rom. ii. 16 ; xvi. 25), he moulded to a great degree the language of the Church while directing its thought. St. Peter had a personal acquaintance with him, in which the mind of St. Paul could not fail to impress itself on him. Thus, while we seem to be able to trace in St. Peter's writings his acquaintance with his colleagues James and John, the influence of St. Paul comes next to that of our Lord. But

he does not merely echo him. He has his own mode of presenting doctrine, his own words, and his own grammatical peculiarities.

In accordance with his desire to give encouragement under trial, he turns to the future in hope (i. 3—5, 13; iii. 9; v. 1, 4, 10, 11). His doctrinal teaching is subordinate to his practical purpose. But it is much fuller than St. James's, as we might expect from his position midway between him and St. Paul. We meet with the office of each person in the Trinity (i. 1), and the power of the Spirit (i. 12, 22). He enters more into the work of our Lord, through whom God receives His glory (iv. 11), and we our call (v. 10). He speaks of his sufferings (v. 1) in connection with their example (ii. 21—23), and their power of cleansing and reconciling (i. 1; ii. 24, 25; iii. 18; iv. 1); of His Resurrection, which is the source of belief (i. 21), and of regeneration (i. 3, 23; iii. 21); of His Ascension, and the subjection of the angels to Him (iii. 22). He does not mention the Law, and his spiritual conception of the Church is seen in ii. 5—9, and of baptism in iii. 21. And yet the treatment and expression in these points is not the same as St. Paul's, and the characteristic teaching about justification does not occur.

The Old Testament is frequently quoted, but we do not find in it what we read about the prophets in i. 10—12. And we learn through St. Peter alone the interest taken by the angels in the Gospel (i. 12), but cf. Eph. iii. 10, and our Lord's preaching to the spirits in prison (iii. 19).

5. *Authenticity.*—This was undisputed in antiquity. It was among the books universally received. The first allusion to it is in 2 Peter iii. 1. It is repeatedly quoted by Polycarp—the great link between the apostolic age and the one which followed it—in his Epistle to the Philippians. He does not name it. But this is done more than once by Irenæus, and by Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen. It is not mentioned in the Muratorian Canon, which admits of explanation; but it was included in the old Latin and Syriac versions.

In modern times it has been called in question, on the ground of the want of originality which is seen in the use of other men's writings—a thing unworthy of an Apostle—and the absence of such a distinct individuality as would befit St. Peter. These points have been dealt with above. A relative originality is apparent in it, though not an absolute one. It is said, also, that the characteristics of the persecution agree best with that which was carried on in Trajan's time, of which we read in the correspondence between Pliny, when he was Governor of Bithynia, *circa A.D. 112*, and the Emperor (Pliny's Letters, x. 97, 98). But the time of Trajan is not so suitable as that of Nero, or one near

it. The Christians were not obliged to defend themselves before the magistrates, but were merely to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asked a reason of the hope that was in them (iii. 15); so that suffering on account of being a Christian was connected with the general dislike of them (see Tacitus, Ann. xv. 44). And we see no trace in the Epistle of the success of the Gospel which brought on the persecution in Bithynia, where the temples had been almost deserted, and there was no longer a sale for animals for the purpose of sacrifice.

The theory of those who refer the Epistle to this date is that it was written by an adherent of St. Paul, who had also a leaning towards St. Peter, to Churches in which attachment to the latter was prevalent, in order to cheer them under their persecution; and that to do this successfully he assumed the name of Peter, and dropped the most distinctive points in Paul's teaching. Or else the contrary is supposed, that the writer was of Peter's school, and adopted much of Paul's doctrine to recommend his letter to those who would otherwise not have paid attention to it.

It seems safer to remain content with the strong external testimony on the one hand, and on the other to recognise in St. Peter himself the union of those elements of thought which, as these conjectures admit, must have belonged to him. And it is not a matter of sentiment, but strictly belongs to the argument, to mention the power exercised by the Epistle on a devout reader. Those who are acquainted with the practical commentary upon it of Archbishop Leighton know the stores of wisdom and strength which it contains. This is more easily understood if it be a genuine work, than on the supposition that it was composed by any one, however able or well-intentioned, who made use of another man's name.

6. *Analysis.*

i. 1—2. *Salutation.*

3—12. *Introduction.*—13—ii. 10. *A Group of General Exhortations.*—(ii. 4—10 is not strictly hortatory, but enforces the preceding passage.)

ii. 11—iv. 19. *A second Group of Exhortations relative to their Position in the Presence of the Gentiles.*

(a) Relating to the influence of Christian example as observed by the heathen, ii. 11—iii. 12.

(b) Prescribing a line of conduct under their insults, ill-treatment, dissolute life, and active enmity, iii. 13—iv. 19.

v. 1—9. *Exhortations to particular Classes and the whole Body.*

10—11. *A Promise that God will perfect them, ending with a Doxology.*

12—14. *Conclusion.*

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

1. *Relation to 1 Peter and Jude.*—The writer in the first Epistle is “Peter, an Apostle of Jesus.” He styles himself here “Simon” (or “Symeon,” cf. Acts xv. 14) “Peter, a Servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ.” From the reference in iii. 1 to 1 Peter, it appears that the readers are the same in both cases, though they are not here spoken of as belonging to the Dispersion in Asia Minor. But the address takes in others. It is quite general, “to them that have obtained like precious faith with us.” This may mean the whole body of Jewish Christians outside Judea who had received the same privileges as himself and his brother Apostles, with the other members of the Church of Jerusalem. But from the absence of that which applies peculiarly to Jewish believers it would seem that the Gentiles, who were very much in St. Peter’s thoughts before, are now distinctly regarded as occupying the same position as the Jewish Church at large. So this is a strictly Catholic Epistle.

Its object, as stated in iii. 17—18, is to promote their steadfastness by warning them of danger which threatened faith and practice, and to urge them to seek a fuller knowledge of God and Jesus Christ (cf. i. 2—3, 8). It is not, then, the same as in 1 Peter. There is no mention of danger from without in the shape of persecution, but from the encouragement to evil living given by false teachers (ii.), and disbelief of the Lord’s coming (iii.).

Its style differs considerably from that of the earlier Epistle, a fact which, as St. Jerome tells us, weighed with those who rejected it, and which he accounted for by supposing that different “interpreters” or secretaries were employed. It has a greater unity of thought. It is more elegant, and comes nearer to having a Greek air about it. A charge has even been made recently, but without success, of an absurd affectation of fine writing. On the other hand, many resemblances between the two Epistles have been pointed out, to appreciate which they must be compared in the original.

Quotations from the Old Testament, which are numerous in 1 Peter, are rare here. Besides the historical references in chaps. ii. and iii., the only use of it is in iii. 8, Psalm xc. 4; iii. 13, Isaiah lxv. 17; and ii. 22, Prov. xxvi. 11, where the parallelism is completed by the Apostle or some earlier writer. The daily vexation of Lot is not contained in the narrative of Genesis, nor the great noise with which the heavens will pass away (iii. 10) in our Lord's words (Matt. xxiv. 35). And the part which fire is to play in the destruction of the earth, *canente David et Sibylla*, is not found in the Psalms, nor was it a point of Jewish belief. Its presence in the Sibylline Oracles, part of the Christian additions which they received, and in Justin, Apol. ii. 7, both rest ultimately, it has been urged, on the teaching of this Epistle (iii. 10—12).

The likeness of a part of it to Jude is obvious. There can be no doubt that one of the writers is indebted to the other. The question as to the priority has been differently answered. But the fact that there is greater vigour, symmetry, and consistency in Jude gives his Epistle the look of originality. And in some places it supplies the key to St. Peter's meaning. Thus, while in Jude 6 the allusion is not clear, but has been explained by the Jewish interpretation of Genesis vi. 1—2, it is less apparent in 2 Peter ii. 4. Without Jude 9 (for the source of which see the chapter on that Epistle) we should not understand what 2 Peter iii. 11 refers to. The chief argument for the earlier date of 2 Peter is that it foretells the coming of those whom St. Jude describes from experience in a way answering to the prophecy. The common opinion, however, is that St. Peter had read Jude's Epistle. But still his use of it is free and independent. It abandons its language suddenly, applies it differently, adds, abridges, and expands. He does not follow Jude fully in his use of traditional views or apocryphal books in the passages already referred to, and he omits all mention of the Book of Enoch (Jude 14—15). He makes additions suitable to his argument in ii. 5, 6—9, 16, 19—22; and founds a great part of iii. on Jude 18.

His readiness to employ the words and thoughts of others in his own way meets us in 1 Peter, though in a less striking manner. It is not an improbable suggestion that St. Jude's Epistle, whether directly communicated to him or not, produced a deep impression on him, partly by its vivid description of existing mischief, and partly by the proof it gave of more than had come under his own notice. This deepened sense of danger to the Church impelled him to do what his position called for while he had time (i. 12—15).

2. *Authenticity.*—The peculiar position of the Epistle in regard to external testimony requires a somewhat full notice. In the

list which Eusebius gives of the Books of the New Testament in the first part of the fourth century (E. H., iii. 25), he states that the greater part were generally received. He calls others of them "controverted but well-known and recognised by most." These are Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and the Apocalypse. But this distinction soon disappears, and we have other lists belonging to the same century either identical with our own, as that of Athanasius, Epiphanius, Jerome, Rufinus, and Augustine, or almost so, as that of Cyril of Jerusalem, in which the Apocalypse is omitted. To the same age belongs the earliest judgment on the subject by Councils of the Church. The Acts of the Council of Laodicea in Phrygia, A.D. 363, contain a list of canonical books which is the same as Cyril's. Its genuineness is doubtful. But no doubt attaches to the Canon of Scripture as recognised by the Third Council of Carthage, A.D. 397, which agrees entirely with that which we inherit. Neither these Councils nor the writers just mentioned professed to do more than record the testimony of the earlier periods as it had come down to them. After this only reminiscences appear from time to time of the doubts entertained as to parts of the Canon, chiefly in those particular regions in which they were once unknown.

(i.) The ground on which a book was acknowledged to be canonical was its having for its author an Apostle or apostolic man. This was a matter on which the Church of the earliest age was able to pronounce. Existing as it did before the writing of any of the books of the New Testament, they were successively entrusted to its recognition and care, under the guidance of Divine providence, as "the Keeper and Witness of Holy Writ." But the knowledge of them was not everywhere complete at the same time.

In the case of the Epistles the Churches to which they were originally written cherished them from the first, and became centres from which the knowledge of them spread. But it took time and intercommunication between the widely-separated communities, in an age when such intercourse was more difficult than it is now, before the whole Church became familiar with all its possessions of this kind, and distinct in the enumeration of them. This result was helped on by conflicts with heresies, and above all by the demand made by order of Diocletian upon the Christians to surrender the Scriptures in order that they might be destroyed. This persecution, carried on in the early years of the fourth century, directed the attention of all to the practical question as to which books, within the whole range of Christian literature, were or were not Scripture.

The full expression of agreement on this point belongs, as we

have seen, to that period. It was not the effect of any corporate act of the whole Church, but an agreement still found in the pages of the leading writers, as to what had been held from the first. We cannot recover the whole process by which it was attained. The entire evidence which was relied on has not reached us; but it is instructive to trace the separate lines of testimony supplied by the earlier periods, such as quotations in orthodox and heretical writings, and the admission or exclusion of certain books from the most ancient versions. These sources, from the character of the literature of the two first centuries and the fragmentary condition in which it has descended to us, must be imperfect. And yet the information actually supplied is remarkable.

This is true not only of the undisputed, but, in a less degree, of the controverted books. But the Second Epistle of Peter has the least amount of this kind of support. There is no undoubted trace of it in Church writers before Origen, who wrote in the first part of the third century. His words are preserved in Eusebius (E. H., vi. 25): "Peter again, on whom the Church of Christ is built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, has left behind an Epistle generally acknowledged, perhaps also a second, for it is a disputed question." There is additional mention of it in his writings, and even quotations from it, but as they are only in the Latin version of Rufinus, who was in the habit of supplementing his author's text, they are not to be trusted. Again, in the interval between Origen and Eusebius, no reference to it is found except one which is implied in the words of Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and a disciple of Origen, in a letter which he wrote to St. Cyprian, A.D. 256. Nor did it form part of the old Syriac version, nor of the old Latin. There is no mention of it in the Muratorian Canon, but this is true also of 1 Peter, about which there was no doubt.

Thus it must be admitted that the evidence for it in detail is extremely small. Still the fact remains that the Church, which had been in no hurry to recognise it or the other disputed books, ultimately pronounced in its favour, as it did in theirs. But there is one point which must not be passed over. It is hard to explain how a writing proceeding from one in the position of St. Peter could have failed to find immediate and universal acceptance. Our wonder is lessened to some extent by the few signs of acquaintance with the first Epistle, which appear for a long time in one quarter. "It must be noticed that the actual traces of the early use of 1 Peter in the Latin churches are very scanty. There is not the least evidence to show that its authority was ever

disputed; but, on the other hand, it does not seem to have been much read. The Epistle is not mentioned in the Muratorian Canon, though no stress can be laid on that fact. It is more strange that Tertullian quotes it only twice, and that, too, in writings which are more or less open to suspicion." (Westcott, "Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament," p. 260, n.) Even on the supposition of its not being genuine, the obscurity of 2 Peter is perplexing. We might have expected to have found it denounced. It is clear that we are not acquainted with all the circumstances.

(ii.) Internal difficulties operated in some degree against it. We have seen what Jerome said about the effect of the difference of style in the two Epistles. And we learn from him that the authority of Jude was questioned on account of its use of Apocryphal writings. This would be likely in a degree to affect the reception of this Epistle. Objections to it of this nature have had great influence in modern times. It contains an accumulation of points open to criticism. An anxiety on the part of the writer to be recognised as an Apostle has been detected, contrasting with the modesty of the earlier letter. It may be replied that the Apostle's aim now was to speak out in his own name, and to use the authority which he had, while the other tone was in agreement with his purpose there.

It has been said that St. Peter's life does not allow for an interval between the Epistles long enough for the rise of a new set of circumstances completely changing his aim. But spiritual evils are often of rapid growth, and noticed in their early stages by those whose duty it is to be on the watch. A mark of later date is seen in the term "holy mount" applied to the scene of the transfiguration (i. 18), as if it were a recognised name for it to the prejudice of Mount Zion. But it seems to imply no more than that the readers were acquainted with the event referred to. And the confining of the apostolic witness to that one incident in our Lord's life, to the omission of His passion and resurrection dwelt on in 1 Peter, is taken as showing a want of the sense of proportion not to be expected in one of His companions. Yet it is in keeping with the view of the whole Epistle. The first coming of the Lord was not denied by the scoffers. It is His "eternal kingdom" into which St. Peter incites his readers to secure an entrance (i. 11). He assures them of the power of Jesus Christ, and His coming in glory by his testimony to the sight of His majesty which had been granted beforehand to him and the two other Apostles. Again St. Paul's Epistles are placed, perhaps with other contemporary writings, in the same rank apparently as the Scriptures of the Old Testament (iii. 16). It is

not what we should look for in St. Peter's time. But the difficulty disappears on reflection.

The writings of the Apostles were originally subordinate to their spoken words. Their witness to the facts and meaning of the Lord's life was delivered by them in person. The circumstances which drew letters from them were only occasional. But they would not have allowed, on the one hand, that their record about the Lord was inferior in importance or authority to the Old Testament; nor that what they wrote was to be less regarded than what they said. Hence there is no reason to see here a trace of the peculiar reverence paid at a later time to the writings of St. Paul and the other Apostles, when their voice was silent; nor to look upon the respect actually claimed for them as an anachronism.

(iii.) The appeal to internal characteristics may be made also on the other side. If St. Peter was not the author, we have before us the work of a forger. But if so, he must have been an artless one, for he has not taken the pains to make his writing conform to the model of the First Epistle in several minor points in which we might have expected it. The spirit of the writer is admitted to be one which beffited the Apostle. This is against the probability of deceit. In writers of a different stamp, and of a later age than that to which the Epistle professes to belong, pious fraud is more intelligible. And if it is a forgery, it stands quite by itself.

Its apostolic tone not only separates it from the mass of spurious books, but from Barnabas or the Shepherd of Hermas, and even from Ignatius and Clement. The character of the false teaching spoken of suits no age so well as that of the Apostles. It was in the undeveloped state of which we find mention in the Colossians and the Pastoral Epistles. It is hard to see how the language which is used would have suited the purpose of one who had in view any full-grown form of heresy. He would almost certainly have given clearer indications of the nature of those errors which he wishes to condemn with the authority of St. Peter. But it may be well to repeat that the consent of the Church is firm ground. The discussion of internal evidence, on one side or the other, gives us a less trustworthy footing.

3. *Analysis.*

(i.) 1—2. *Greeting.*

3—11. *Exhortations.*—To meet the bounty of God by diligence in rising through a sevenfold series from faith to charity, 3—7; in order to avoid unfruitfulness and blindness, and to secure an entrance into the eternal kingdom of Christ Jesus, 8—11.

12—15. *Personal Reasons for writing the Epistle.*

16—21. *Grounds for expecting the Lord's coming.*—His majesty witnessed beforehand by the Apostle on the Mount, 16—18 the teaching of prophecy, 19—21.

(ii.) 1—22. *False Teachers to be expected; their punishment.*—There shall be false teachers among them, as there were false prophets in Israel, 1—3; God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the ungodly under punishment till the day of judgment; as shown by the example of Noah and Lot, on the one hand, and by that of the sinful angels and Sodom and Gomorrha, on the other, 4—10. Description of these teachers (so far as they have already made their appearance), 11—16; their influence, 17—22.

(iii.) 1—10. *The Lord's coming defended against Scoffers.* The aim of this and the former Epistle is to remind them of the words of the prophets and the Lord, 1—2. Scoffers will come deriding their expectation of Him, 3—4. They wilfully forget that God, who once destroyed the earth by water, will do so again by fire, 5—7. His delay is long-suffering, 8—9; but He will come, and suddenly, 10.

11—18. *Concluding Exhortations, including mention of St. Paul's Epistles. Doxology.*

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

1. *Authorship*.—The seventh and last of the so-called Catholic Epistles claims (verse 1) to be the work of “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.” Of the several persons in the New Testament bearing the name of Jude only two can be said in any way to answer to this description of our writer, viz. :—

(i.) “Jude of James,” a member of the band of Apostles, Luke vi. 16; Acts i. 13; John xiv. 22. This phrase is translated by a somewhat unusual method in the Authorised Version, “Jude, *the brother of James*,” in order to make the title agree with that by which the writer of this Epistle definitely names himself; but the ordinary significance of this form of expression in Greek demands rather the translation, “Jude, *the son of James*,” as it is rendered in the Peshito Version, and by Tyndale, Cranmer, Luther, and most modern critics; and indeed in the case of the other Apostles so described, the ellipse is thus supplied in the Authorised Version, *e.g.* “James, *the son of Alphæus*.”

The twelve members of the Apostolic body in all the lists (Matt. x. 2; Mark iii. 16; Luke vi. 14; Acts i. 13) fall into three groups of four. In the first two lists the name “Jude of James” does not occur, but its place is represented by the name “Thaddæus,” in consequence of which “Jude of James” has been identified with Thaddæus, who was—according to some MSS. of the Greek Testament, followed by Jerome—also called Lebbæus.

Also, since in all four lists of the Apostles, James, the son of Alphæus, is the first name of the group in which the member Thaddæus or Jude of James is also always placed, it has been generally thought that this James is the father intended in the title, Jude the son of James.

This Jude, therefore, was—(a) an Apostle; (b) also called Thaddæus; (c) the son of James the Little and grandson of Alphæus.

(ii.) Jude, the brother of the Lord, mentioned in Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3, together with a brother named James.

These two men have been by some critics regarded as one and the same person.

According to this supposition Jude is *the brother* of James, he and James being both sons of Alphæus; Alphæus is the same as Clopas, the husband of a Mary (Mark xv. 40; John xix. 25), who is regarded as the sister of the Virgin Mary, so that Jude and James would be the cousins (in Greek “brethren”) of our Lord, and agree with the names recorded in Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3.

Against this view, however, are the two facts—first that, as already stated, it is unusual to interpret the Greek phrase, “*Jude of James*,” in any other manner than “*Jude, the son of James*;” next, that it is distinctly remarked in John vii. 5, that our Lord’s brethren did not believe in Him, and therefore it is impossible that they could have been among the Apostles; and indeed from Acts i. 13, 14, it is clear that they were distinguished from the Apostles after their conversion. It would seem safer, therefore, to regard “*Jude of James*,” or Thaddæus, the Apostle, as one person, and Jude, the brother of the Lord, as another distinct from him.

If this be the case, which of the two may we more probably regard as the author of the Epistle?

The writer styles himself (verse 1) “*the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James*,” from which it would appear; first, that he was not Jude, *the son* of James, the Apostle; next, that he was not an Apostle at all, or he would have mentioned the fact in the usual manner (as St. Paul in the first verse of almost all his Epistles, and St. Peter in the opening of his two letters), and by identifying himself as an Apostle of Jesus Christ he would not have been obliged to fix his personality by the description “*brother of James*.”

In accordance with this conclusion is the fact that nowhere in his Epistle does the writer speak as an Apostle, but perhaps rather as one outside the Apostolic body, *e.g.* in verse 17, “*Remember ye the words which were spoken before* of the Apostles.” And the absence of the Epistle in the Peshito (Syriac) Version of the New Testament may perhaps also be taken as a sign that it was not the work of the Apostle Jude Thaddæus, to whom tradition assigns the foundation of the Syrian Church of Edessa.

For these reasons, therefore, the writer would appear to have been Jude, the brother of the Lord and of James, who had probably been converted to the faith after the Lord’s resurrection (see Acts i. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5). If so, his brother James must have been a well-known person at the time, from the introduction of the relationship in the opening words of the letter, and he was therefore perhaps the James who was the first Bishop

of Jerusalem (Acts xii. 17; xv. 13, 19; xxvi. 18; Gal. ii. 9, 12), and possibly the author of the Epistle bearing that name.

Against the identification of our author with the brother of the Lord, and in favour of the writer's being the Apostle Jude, it has been alleged—

(i.) That the phrase, “servant of Jesus Christ,” *may* convey the idea of Apostleship, as in Rom. i. 1, Tit. i. 1. But in these passages, as in 2 Pet. i. 1, it is coupled with, and apparently distinct from, the title of Apostle; and in Phil. i. 1, it is applied also to Timothy, who was not an Apostle; and, lastly, it may be noted that, as the phrase certainly does not of necessity imply the Apostolate, it would assuredly be an insufficient allusion to it in a solitary letter from one of the less-known members of the Apostolic body.

(ii.) That if he were really the brother of the Lord, the writer would certainly have described himself as such rather than as the brother of James. But it is probable, as the author of the “Adumbrationes” ascribed to Clement of Alexandria long ago pointed out, that from motives of modesty he preferred to veil his casual relationship with the Lord under the general and less distinctive title, “the servant of Jesus Christ,” as expressing his more important spiritual union with Him who had been by the Resurrection exalted as the Son of God, for the union through faith eclipsed the union through the flesh (Matt. xii. 49, 50; Heb. ii. 11). Indeed, as Dean Alford remarks, “had such a designation as the brother of the Lord been found in the address of an Epistle, it would have formed a strong *a priori* objection to its authenticity,” as savouring rather of “those superstitious feelings with which the next and following ages regarded His earthly relatives.”

It seems, therefore, more in accordance with the natural and simple bearing of the evidence to assume that the author of the Epistle was Jude, the brother of the Lord (whatever exact relationship that designation may imply), and not Jude Thaddæus, the Apostle, the son of James and grandson of Alphæus.

As to the after history of the writer:—The traditions connected with the name of Jude (all of which appear to be of late origin) relate to the Apostle Jude Thaddæus, except the interesting story preserved by Eusebius (“Eccl. Hist.” iii. 20) from Hegesippus, that the descendants of Jude, “the reputed brother of the Saviour according to the flesh,” were viewed with suspicion by the Emperor Domitian from their connection with David, the ancestor of the coming Messianic King, as likely to prove leaders in any Jewish rising against the Roman power; but they were eventually dismissed by him with contempt as

harmless rustics, when he found on examination that their ideas of the kingdom to come were not what he had imagined.

2. *Authenticity*.—The exact personality of the author being uncertain, we are not surprised to find that the canonicity of the letter has been a matter of doubt, not merely in modern times, but also in the early ages of the Church when it was not universally known.

The evidence bearing on the authenticity of any work naturally falls under two heads:—

Internal evidence gathered from the contents of the writing itself.

External evidence, consisting of points in the writings of other authors, or of facts in history, which in any way connect themselves with the work in question.

(i.) The evidence of genuineness which the letter itself presents is chiefly of a negative character, and may be summed up as follows:—

(a) No portion of it gives ground for the faintest suspicion that it was written with intent to impose upon the Church in any degree. The simple and indefinite description of the writer is in itself a mark of the straightforward character of the work. Accordingly we find that the doubts as to its canonicity have never been based upon any supposed traces of forgery in the Epistle.

(b) Neither the personage of the author, nor the nature of the contents, are sufficiently ambitious to render any fraud probable. Relatively speaking, the Epistle is of little importance either for novelty of revelation or for special application of doctrine; and a forger would have aimed at some more definite and significant object in order to obtain acceptance for his work. And it is from this comparatively unimportant character of the letter that the doubts as to its authenticity have mainly arisen, the question in the minds of the ancients being whether it seemed to fill any real gap in the fabric of Holy Scriptures.

(ii.) Passing to the evidence relating to the letter from external sources, we may briefly trace its history as follows:—

It is not noticed by any of the Apostolic Fathers, nor in the so-called Epistle of Barnabas and Shepherd of Hermas, nor is there any vestige of its existence in the writings of Irenæus and Papias. As already stated, it is absent from the Peshito Version of the New Testament (a work of untraceable antiquity) in com-

mon with the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the Second and Third of St. John, and the Apocalypse. This fact, however, may merely show that at the early date when the Syriac translation was made the Epistle had not reached the Asiatic Churches, while the brevity of the letter and the limited aim of its contents sufficiently account for the absence of quotations from it in the early fathers.

Side by side as containing the earliest known trace of the Epistle come—

- (a) The old Latin Version of the New Testament, which it is thought must certainly have been made previous to A.D. 170, where the letter is found in its place among the canonical books; and
- (b) The Muratorian fragment of the Canon, *circa* A.D. 170, which says, “The Epistle of Jude and two Epistles bearing the name of John are received in the Catholic Church,” or “among the Catholic Epistles,” the text and interpretation being uncertain.

Clement of Alexandria, *circa* A.D. 165 to 220, refers to the Epistle more than once as the authoritative work of St. Jude, and is the first of the fathers to notice it.

Origen, A.D. 186 to 253, though in one passage seeming to concede only a disputed reception to the Epistle, yet elsewhere quotes from it several times, and in his comments on Matt. xiii. 55, 56, characterizes it as “an Epistle of few verses, but full of words vigorous with heavenly grace.”

Tertullian, *circa* A.D. 190, not only regards the Epistle as the work of “an Apostle,” but also uses it as a decisive proof of the authority of the Book of Enoch, which is quoted in it.

By subsequent writers it is frequently alluded to as an inspired authority. The cautious Eusebius, however, *circa* A.D. 270 to 340, even in his time in one passage (E. H. ii. 23) regards the book as a spurious writing, though in another (E. H. iii. 25) he merely places it among the disputed works. Lastly, Jerome, at the close of the fourth century, places the Epistle among the canonical books as the work of an Apostle, explaining that the doubts as to its authenticity in the past were chiefly due to the quotation from the Apocryphal Book of Enoch.

From the varied tone of these notices it will be observed that the Epistle only passed into acceptance throughout the Church by very slow degrees, which may be explained by the brevity and comparative insignificance of the work, the uncertainty as to its author, and the allusions to Apocryphal books which it contains; whilst it must also be borne in mind that the tendency of delay in the recognition of the Epistle by the different

Churches would be to increase rather than to diminish the force of prejudice.

3. *Object.*—The letter is addressed (verse 1) “to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus, and called.” This salutation is so general as to be applicable to all Christians, and thus serves to illustrate the aim of a “Catholic” Epistle in the simplest sense of this term. Similarly the exhortations and warnings throughout the Epistle would apply equally to all branches of the Church.

But perhaps two hints seem to point to a particularly Jewish Church as the primary destination of the letter:—

(i.) The description of the writer as the “brother of James,” which would not only be a sufficient identification, but would also have a special significance to Palestinian Christians, if that brother were James, the famous Bishop of Jerusalem.

(ii.) The thoroughly Jewish historical allusions; *e.g.* the Redemption from Egypt and purification in the wilderness (verse 5); the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah (verse 7); the Rabbinic legend about the body of Moses (verse 9); the sins of Cain, Balaam, and Korah (verse 11); the traditions concerning Enoch (verses 14 and 15), all of which imply a Jewish turn of mind in the recipients of the Epistle.

It would therefore appear that the letter was originally written to Hebrew-Christians in Palestine, and this may perhaps be corroborated by the allusion to Apostolic teaching, *as a whole*, in verse 17, where it seems to be implied that the readers of the Epistle had themselves heard the Apostles generally.

The object which St. Jude had in writing to them is stated (verse 3) to be “to exhort them that they should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints;” and this exhortation is said (verse 4) to be rendered necessary by the evil examples of certain reprobate members in the Church, against whom he directs his efforts to warn his readers by a vehement exposure of their wickedness. These offenders appear to have been carnally-minded libertines who used the freedom of Christians from the literal obligation of the Mosaic law as a cloke for vice, living in licentiousness themselves and railing contemptuously against all authorities and rulers both ecclesiastical and civil. The handling of the subject will be more evident from an analysis of the letter; it is modelled throughout on a careful plan—bordering on the artificial—the main divisions, subdivisions, and instances all being arranged on a threefold system.

(A) *Preface*; verses 1—4:

I. Salutation: verse 1—2.

II. Object of the letter: verse 3.

III. Reason for this object: verse 4.

(B) *Warnings*; verses 5—19:

I. Three instances of Divine punishment for corporate wickedness applied to the case of these libertines: verses 5—10:

- (a) The rebellious Israelites in the wilderness: verses 5, 8.
- (b) The unfaithful angels in contrast to the faithful: verses 6, 9.

- (c) The sensual cities of the plain: verses 7, 10.

II. Three instances of individual wickedness illustrating the sins of these evil-doers: verse 11:

- (a) Cain=disobedience.
- (b) Balaam=greed.
- (c) Korah=railing.

III. Three vivid descriptions of these latest rebels, with three tokens by which their condemnation may be evident; verses 12—19:

- (a) Illustration of their state by images from Nature: verses 12, 13; to be recognised from its agreement with the words of Enoch: verses 14, 15.
- (b) By their base thoughts and language: verse 16; fulfilling the prophecies of the Apostles: verses 17, 18.
- (c) By their unfaithful conduct, attested by their lack of spirituality: verse 19.

(C.) *Exhortations*; verses 20—25:

I. As to *themselves* (verse 20, 21) let his readers be firm in:

- (a) Faith: verse 20.
- (b) Love: verse 21a.
- (c) Hope: verse 21b.

II. With reference to the *libertines* (verses 22, 23) let the faithful treat:

- (a) Some of them with gentle measures: verse 22.
- (b) Others with strong remedies: verse 23a.
- (c) But all their sins with utter disapproval: verse 23b.

III. As regards *God*: Doxology (verses 24, 25) let all join in thanks to Him for:

- (a) His support against similar falling away: verse 24a.
- (b) His grace in sanctification: verse 24b.
- (c) His wisdom in overruling everything: verse 25.

4. *Date, Place, etc., of Writing*.—On these points we have no direct information, either internal or external: all the indications are so slender that the inferences deduced from them have varied considerably in everything except uncertainty.

(i.) The story preserved by Eusebius (quoted above) seems to imply that the descendants of St. Jude were summoned from Palestine to the Emperor Domitian; and as we found that the writer appeared to claim a Palestinian reputation in the opening

of his Epistle, we may perhaps most reasonably conjecture that the letter was written somewhere in the Holy Land.

(ii.) In verse 17 the teaching of the Apostles is alluded to as a thing of the past ; "the words which *were spoken before*" "how they *told* you." This language, however, cannot be forced to mean more than that the Apostles had passed away from that particular part of the world where St. Jude's readers resided, and were carrying on their work elsewhere.

(iii.) The internal condition of the Church to which the Epistle points is certainly not very far advanced. There appears to have been no definite code of discipline ; notorious offenders are still members of the Church, and present at the Agapæ, or Love-feasts, which united all Church-members : even the most violent upholders of new opinions are not ecclesiastically deposed, and are only just beginning to separate themselves (verse 19). The reaction of the escape from Judaism is still fresh, as in the case of the recipients of some of St. Paul's Epistles, and shows itself in the laxity of these libertines ; their excesses are of a primitive nature, and their heresies are not yet developed into a system.

(iv.) It is noteworthy that the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) is in no way alluded to, which would appear to point to a previous date for the composition of the letter. It has indeed been asserted that the event is in no degree connected with the subject of the Epistle, and that therefore there is no cause for surprise in the omission of all reference to it, although it might have already taken place. But the writer expressly bases his warnings on the most notable judgments of God for disobedience ; and therefore, with such a subject in hand, he would have found the destruction of Jerusalem and overthrow of the Jewish nation signally to the purpose, if it had been accomplished, as a recent instance parallel to that of the Church in the wilderness (verse 5) or of the fallen angels (verse 6).

The result of these slight indications is to point to a date towards the close of the era of general Apostolic labour, yet previous to the fall of Jerusalem, *i.e.* some time between A.D. 60 — 70.

As to the language in which the Epistle was originally written, there is not sufficient warrant to suppose that the letter ever appeared in any other than the Greek dress which it now wears. Attempts have been made to prove that the original was in Hebrew ; but the fact that the language is Greek written by a Jew is enough to explain any apparent Semiticisms which may be noticeable in places.

5. *Peculiarities.*—Besides the impetuous and intensely earnest style, which must be an evident token of the writer's character,

this short Epistle presents in an important degree the interesting peculiarity of definitely referring to events in the ancient history of the Church of God which are not contained in the Canonical Books of the Old Testament, even going so far in one startling instance as to quote directly from the Apocryphal Book of Enoch.

(i.) In verse 9 we are informed of a conflict between the Archangel Michael and the devil on the body of Moses, and it is natural to inquire whence the writer obtained this allusion.

In the "Adumbrationes" assigned to Clement of Alexandria, and in Origen's work "De Principiis" III., ii. 1, mention is made of an apocryphal book called "The Assumption of Moses" (parts of which have been discovered in a Latin translation), as containing notice of this conflict; and this, according to Didymus of Alexandria, was the reason why the Manichees rejected the Epistle.

But we are not in a position to say that this book was in existence at the time of St. Jude, nor that—supposing it were written before his day—he was actually acquainted with it, though, according to some late writers, Gal. v. 6; vi. 15, is a quotation from it by St. Paul.

It is more probable that St. Jude's knowledge of this legend was derived from the same source as that whence the author of "The Assumption of Moses" received it, viz., from the tradition of the Jewish Rabbis. The original groundwork of the legend is doubtless the passage in the Targum of Jonathan (which is supposed to have existed in oral form at the time of our Lord), on Deut. xxxiv. 6, which states that the grave of Moses was placed under the care of Michael. Round this centre floated a whole cycle of legends, traceable here and there in Rabbinic literature, of which St. Jude here adopts one—without necessarily investing it with any canonical authority—to illustrate his purpose, as being known to his readers and showing the feelings of right-minded men—apart from inspiration—against certain conduct.

Similarly, St. Paul takes up names current amongst the Rabbis for the Egyptian magicians who imitated the miracles of Moses before Pharaoh (2 Tim. iii. 8), or employs the Rabbinic legend of the Rock following the Israelites in the wilderness, to draw out a spiritual lesson (1 Cor. x. 4); compare also Acts vii. 22, 23, 30; Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 12; xi. 24, for a somewhat similar use of Rabbinic tradition to supplement the narratives of the Old Testament. The case is analogous to St. Paul's applications of the sayings of heathen poets in Acts xvii. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 32; Tit. i. 12.

(ii.) In verses 6, 14, 15, we have passages which appear to be

derived from the Book of Enoch. This book is now generally assigned—at least in its earliest portions—to a date quite a century before our Lord, and the widespread acquaintance with it in the ecclesiastical writings of the second century A.D. seems to render it probable that St. Jude derived his language in these verses rather from the book itself than from independent tradition afterwards incorporated into the book. The Book of Enoch is an important early work of the apocalyptic class modelled on the style of the latter part of Daniel.

It was used by the early fathers—Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, Augustine—though Tertullian alone regarded it as canonical. After their time, however, the book as a whole was lost, and all that remained of it was represented by the quotations in these and other writers. But in 1773 the *Æthiopic* translation of the book was discovered and brought over to England by the traveller Bruce. This translation was made during the fourth century A.D. from the Greek, but the original language in which the book was written is generally thought to have been Hebrew.

It contains, in one hundred and eight chapters, a series of visions claiming to have been accorded to Enoch and Noah, and explaining the working of Providence in the world—from a Jewish point of view.

The substance of Jude, verse 6, is contained repeatedly in the book, and it seems preferable to refer his traditions to this work rather than to Gen. vi. 2, of which the interpretation is uncertain and much disputed.

The passage in Jude, verses 14 and 15, is contained almost verbatim in Enoch, chap. ii.

On the remaining important point to notice, viz., the relation between the Second Epistle of St. Peter and that of St. Jude—see the chapter on the former Epistle.

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

1. *The Enigma of the Church.*—It is impossible not to sympathise, to a certain extent at least, with those who, in every age, have found difficulty in accepting as a divinely inspired and canonical book the Revelation of St. John. In its contents and in its style, it is so entirely different from all the other books of the New Testament, that it is not easy to class it along with them as produced by the operation of the same Spirit, and directed to the attainment of the same end. Everything else contained in the sacred volume, exclaims the humble follower of Christ, content to walk by the light of a few simple truths, is comparatively easy ; “A wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.” Here all is dark and perplexing—an extravagance of figure such as was never before witnessed, and an irregularity of language such as has no parallel in any ancient writing, either sacred or profane ; it is impossible that this book can be from Him who loves to guide the weak in judgment, and to teach them His way. Such was undoubtedly the feeling of those who in early Christian times refused to acknowledge the inspiration of the Apocalypse.

The feeling is hardly less prevalent now than it was then ; while many who have really tried to grapple with the subject, and have for this purpose studied the history of apocalyptic interpretation, have only become more perplexed than ever. Tossed from one system of interpretation to another ; introduced to a medley of dates deduced from the same words, but often differing from each other by centuries ; taught to see at one moment the greatest, at another the paltriest, events of human history represented by the same figures, and always finding their guides animated by unshaken confidence in their own views, and even passionately opposed to others, it is no wonder that the further they try to penetrate into the wood, the more obscure and tangled does their path become. Strange surely that it should be so, and that the only book in the Bible which has annexed to it the promise, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the

prophecy," should be, at first sight at least, the one most difficult to comprehend.

Yet the Church would under no circumstances be entitled to despair. If she has good reason to believe that the authenticity and genuineness of the work are established by a chain of evidence, as unbroken and strong as in the case of any other book of the New Testament; more especially if the evidence points to St. John, "the beloved disciple" of Jesus, rather than to some wholly unknown person, as the author, she must believe that the difficulties connected with the subject are capable of being, and will be finally, overcome. Nothing can be more inconsistent with the whole idea of revelation, nothing more out of keeping with God's other dealings in creation, providence, or grace, than to imagine that a book has been put into our hands designed to perplex and trouble us. And this is the more evident when we observe that the writer of the book distinctly states that he writes for the encouragement and comfort of his "brethren," of those who were "companions with him in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus;" that he feels that he has a divine commission to "show unto God's servants the things which must shortly come to pass;" and that in the seven epistles of chaps. ii. and iii., which contain an abstract of all that is afterwards unfolded in the book, we have the seven times repeated cry, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches" (chaps. i. 1, 9, ii., iii.).

The expectation thus founded in the nature of the case is confirmed by results. It can hardly be denied that the more recent interpretations of the Apocalypse have exhibited greater unity of view as to its meaning than had been witnessed for several centuries. As the storms of the period immediately preceding and following the Reformation passed away, light began to break again in the Church's sky, and the mistaken interpretations of a time of disunion and discord among brethren to disappear, till at last we seem to be on the verge of a period when, if opinions are not less discordant than ever regarding some external critical questions affecting the Apocalypse, they are approaching harmony as to the principles upon which it is, if received, to be understood.

In these circumstances it would be at once faithless and cowardly to despair. The writer of the book did not only understand what he was saying. The sublime march of his periods; the grandeur of his figures when we look at them with Jewish eyes; the at one time terrible, at another pathetic, eloquence of his language; the glow, in short, of prophetic and poetic enthusiasm which is diffused over every part of his work, show that he

was himself cheered, roused, and transported by what he saw. As he saw he would have us see ; and we must be as he was if we would see with him. Let the Church therefore only approach her task of endeavouring to see with meekness, humility, and love ; let her rise above the thought of different, of too often jarring, sections of her body ; let her remember that she is one, and that it is with the whole body as the Bride of Christ that she has here to do, and there can be little doubt that the darkness so often complained of will be dispelled, and that she too, by what she sees, will be not less cheered, roused, and transported than the beloved disciple was to whom the vision was first given.

2. *The Unity of the Apocalypse.*—In turning our attention more particularly to the book before us, recent events have shown that one point in connection with it requires fuller notice than would have been thought necessary only a few years ago. The unity of the book has been of late seriously disputed. It had been so before, but the controversy had been apparently exhausted ; and so general was the agreement that one author only had taken part in its composition, that commentators had begun in their *prolegomena* to leave the question of its unity undiscussed. Völter and Weizäcker at Tübingen, and Vischer and Harnack at Marburg, have recently revived the controversy, and it is necessary to say something in regard to it. It is unnecessary, indeed, to speak at any length either of Weizäcker or of Harnack. The former in his elaborate work, "Das Apostolische Zeitalter," 1886, has simply intimated his belief that the Apocalypse is in many of its parts more or less interpolated ; the latter, in his "Texte und Untersuchungen," vol. ii. part 3, 1886, has done nothing more than adopt, with a few commendatory suggestions, the views of his pupil Vischer. The real attack is by Völter first and Vischer afterwards.

(i.) The first of these critics published his views in 1882, and afterwards in a second and enlarged edition of his pamphlet in 1885. They amount to this, that instead of proceeding as a whole from one author, the Apocalypse consists of five different parts, belonging to eras of the Church more or less remote from each other, and written by at least four different persons. The book had been at first very brief, and greatly limited in its scope ; but so much had it been valued, that it was repeatedly enlarged, and different recensions were produced, the last of which appeared between A.D. 160 and A.D. 170. The attempt is made to show that there is a correspondence between the different parts of the book and contemporary events so close as to justify the conclusion that the former were taken from the latter. It is needless to add that, under the process, the spiritual life and power of the book wholly

disappear, and that it becomes a narrative relating only to the craft and follies of cunning impostors, wicked kings, and deluded peoples.

The second critic named pursues an entirely different course. Under the impression that there are two distinct lines of thought in the Apocalypse, especially in its Christology, and that these two lines cannot be traced to one mind, Vischer supposes that the groundwork of what we now possess was a *Jewish* Apocalypse which had passed into the early Christian Church, and attained great reputation there; that an unknown member of the latter body had resolved to adapt the book more thoroughly to Christian uses, and that for this purpose he had interpolated it with Christian thoughts, more particularly prefixing the first three chapters, adding the latter part of the twenty-second chapter, and introducing now the word "lamb," now again the word "Jesus" or "Christ," but occasionally also finding room for whole paragraphs, such as the second vision of chap. vii., the first vision of chap. xiv., and several verses associated in chaps. xxi. and xxii. with the descriptions there given of the millennial glory and of the New Jerusalem. The re-worker thus, as it were, baptized the old Jewish Apocalypse in a Christian font, and a Jewish became a Christian child.

(ii.) We may be spared dwelling at any length upon the views of the two writers named, for this reason, if for no other, that they have taken up each an attitude of determined opposition to the other. Vischer in publishing his theory was careful to demonstrate the weakness of Völter's; Völter in self-defence held up Vischer's theory to ridicule and scorn. The two critics may be left to bring their controversy to a close at the time most convenient for themselves. Meanwhile it is sufficient to say that neither has gained anything like a general, or even a widespread, acceptance for his theory. Völter has failed to account for that similarity of style which marks the whole book and is inconsistent with the supposition of so many different authors having been engaged on it, while his correspondences of place and time are only gained by forcing the text into meanings which it is impossible for it to bear. Vischer, on the other hand, while proceeding upon the simple plan of cutting out all direct Christian allusions in the book, leaves us as a Jewish work what no Jew could have written, expectations and hopes inconsistent with those which we know to have been entertained in Israel, and long passages which, even when such words as "the lamb" or "Jesus" have been removed from them, can only be accounted for on the supposition that they are the product of a Christian pen. Both writers, too, ignore the fact that a spiritual interpretation of the Apocalypse,

not differing in principle from that which must be applied to other parts of Scripture, is possible; that harmony of purpose may be shown to mark all the visions which it contains; that one consistent meaning may be traced throughout; and that the difficulties to be met by the theories resorted to are easily overcome by attention to those principles of plan and structure upon which the author everywhere proceeds.

These last considerations, indeed, are to be urged not only negatively but positively by the defender of the unity of the *Apocalypse*. No book probably ever proceeded from the pen of man all the parts of which were so closely interlaced with one another. Allusions in earlier parts are very frequently unintelligible until they are more fully explained in later parts. Descriptions in later parts point back for the key that is to open up the mystery of their meaning to earlier parts. Again and again, when we seem, upon a superficial inspection, to be dealing with visions relating to new subjects, we find upon a closer examination that we have only before us old thoughts in a new form. Throughout the book there is from first to last the unfolding of one great thought, of one great principle of the Divine government of the Church and the world. Add to all this that the writer's peculiarities of style and language are of a kind which render it almost impossible to think that a forger or interpolator, especially in an age for which our opponents claim artlessness of composition as a leading characteristic, could successfully imitate them without betraying what he was, and we are entitled to conclude that, whatever other difficulties the *Revelation* of St. John may present, it is at least in its authorship one compact and united whole.

3. *Authorship*.—The book is one. Who is the author of it? is the next question that the reader naturally asks. The Church, from the beginning to the present century, with an exception so trifling that it is unnecessary to notice it, has always answered, the Apostle John. An introduction such as this is hardly the place to present in regular and successive order the various testimonies of early Christianity by which the Church was led to this conclusion. And it is the less necessary to do so because their force is not denied. The *external* evidence in favour, not only of the apostolic but of the Johannine authorship of the book, is even singularly unanimous and complete; and doubts as to the validity of the long unquestioned conclusion have sprung wholly from another quarter.

Internal considerations have awakened them. The nature of the book itself has produced a feeling of uncertainty whether it can be ascribed to any member of the apostolic circle; and more particularly whether, if St. John be at the same time the author of the *Gospel*, it can be ascribed to him. Keeping in view for a

moment only the first of these two points, it may be observed that there is nothing in the book inconsistent with the supposition that it may have proceeded from one belonging to a company of poor and unlettered men. The poetic fire which it displays, the rich exuberance of figures and symbols which it employs, the strong and impassioned language in which it speaks, are not the result of education in any age, and least of all of the education given in Jewish circles at the beginning of the Christian era. The formalism of the Rabbis of that time, their narrow devotion to the letter only of what they studied, their dependence upon the sayings of their predecessors in their schools, and their repression of all originality in their pupils, would tend powerfully to check the development of that spirit which the *Apocalypse* reveals.

We can understand the writing of such a book if its author came to his task either from direct study of the old prophets of his people or from personal contact with the life of Jesus, for in both cases conventionalities had been broken through, mannerism had been overcome, and freedom, alike of thought and style, had burst the bonds of that trifling occupation with the smallest particulars of the Divine Word, in which its general spirit had been lost sight of and its great end missed. But we cannot so well understand it if we are to look for the writer among those who were educated, in the sense in which education was then given, among the "wise and prudent" rather than among the "unlearned and ignorant" (*Acts iv. 13*). Nor is there an improbability in the idea that its author should have pursued, at least in early life, the occupation of a fisherman upon the Sea of Galilee, and that he should never have risen above an estate of poverty. A similar objection might be urged against the idea that "*The Pilgrim's Progress*" was written by a poor tinker of Bedford. Depth of emotion, insight into the dealings of God with the soul of man, hatred of sin, conviction of righteousness, and a strong persuasion that, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, there is a righteous Governor of the universe who will yet avenge His elect, may be found not less among the poor and suffering than among the rich and prosperous. Nay, they are more natural to the one than to the other, for the former know, by an experience such as the latter can hardly have, by an experience which penetrates the inmost fibres of their being, what the trials of this world are, and what that "*patience in Jesus*" (*Rev. i. 9*) is which alone can meet them. We can have no difficulty, therefore, in accepting the conclusion that, striking as the characteristics of the *Apocalypse* are, that book *may* have proceeded from one of our Lord's Apostles, or even from St. John.

The question, however, still remains whether, although such authorship be allowed to be possible, the thought of it is not forbidden by indications contained in the book itself. And this difficulty, it is imagined, may be urged with irresistible power against those who receive the Fourth Gospel as, not less than the Apocalypse, the work of the Apostle John. The Church does thus receive it, and the belief of the Church upon the point has been defended in the Introduction to the Fourth Gospel contained in this volume. The present writer accepts the conclusion ; and he is bound, therefore, to say something, however briefly, upon the possibility of ascribing the Apocalypse also to the same Apostle.

Several minor objections, indeed, drawn from internal indications, we may be permitted to pass by without dwelling upon them. In the eyes of the English reader they will hardly appear to have much weight. Such are the facts, that the John of the Apocalypse names himself, while the writer of the Fourth Gospel and of the catholic Epistles ascribed to St. John does not do so ; that, instead of describing himself in the opening of his book as an Apostle, he calls himself only a “servant” of Christ (chap. i. 1) ; and that he could not have spoken as he does in chap. xxi. 14, of the wall of the New Jerusalem having “twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb,” had he himself been one of the twelve. Objections like these will make no impression upon the mind if we can satisfy ourselves that the more serious objections still remaining may be met. Let us turn, therefore, to them.

(i.) It is urged with great confidence that the style and language of the two books are so different as to show that they cannot be the expression of the same mind. The difference is admitted ; but as to the mere *language*, it can be shown, though hardly without constant reference to the original Greek, that the difference is designed, and that there is a strikingly parallel difference between the plainer parts of the discourses of Christ and His more sublime and mysterious utterances at critical moments of His life. Of this difference, our Lord’s discourses upon the Last Things, in Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi., and His words at the institution of the Last Supper, Matt. xxvi. 26—29 ; Mark xiv. 22—25 ; Luke xxii. 14—20 ; 1 Cor. xi. 23—25, to say nothing of the discourses in St. John’s Gospel, compared with those in the Synoptists, may afford sufficient illustration.

As to the general *style and method* of the Apocalypse, again, as it shows itself in symbol and figure, and on the supposition, which appears to be the most probable, that both it and the Fourth Gospel were written in the last decade of the first century, the chief difficulty is to conceive that the same writer could employ two such different styles at the same period of his life. Yet the

difficulty is not so great as might at first appear. It really resolves itself into the question, Could the same writer, at the same age and surrounded by the same circumstances, entertain the calm thought of an historical life lived in the past, side by side with a poetic and prophetic vision of the future, which the Leader of that life had Himself suggested at moments when He rose to loftier than ordinary heights of prophetic utterance? There seems no good reason why that question should be answered in the negative; and if the two pictures could dwell in his mind, he could certainly present them to his readers. It is too often forgotten that, in our Lord's own language, we have two entirely different styles of thought; and that if these could coexist in Him, they might also coexist in one to whom He was so drawn by some wonderful affinity that He regarded Him as "the disciple whom He loved."

(ii.) With not less confidence it is urged that the tone and temper of the two books are so different, that if St. John be the author of the one he cannot also be the author of the other. But this objection rests upon a failure to estimate the true character of the Gospel similar to that of which we have just spoken in regard to the utterances of Jesus. There can be no greater mistake than to speak of the Fourth Gospel as a calm and peaceful idyl, revealing nothing but the outgoings of a tender heart towards loved disciples, and breathing nothing but serenity and repose. Such is certainly not the character of the Apocalypse, but it is not less false to fact to say that it is the character of the Gospel. If the one is full of tumult, war, and excited passion, the other is not less so. There are, no doubt, passages in it which exhibit the spirit ascribed by partial observation to the whole. Such are chaps. xiii. to xvii., in which Jesus finds Himself in the bosom of the little family He is shortly to leave, and in which He speaks to them with all the sympathy and tenderness of a dying father who knows that he is about to be taken from his children, and that after his departure they will be exposed without the support of his immediate presence to the coldness and opposition of the world. But these chapters are not the central portion of the book. That portion we must seek for in the chapters closing with chap. xii., in which the Saviour's struggle with the world is so strikingly presented to us. In these chapters, accordingly, we meet the very same characteristics as those by which the Apocalypse is marked—a constantly increasing opposition between the world and Jesus, the hatred of the former to the latter, as well as the severity of the latter's judgment on the former, ever deepening in intensity and force. There is excitement, tumult, war in the one book as much as in the other. In each the compassionate Redeemer, who purchased His people with His blood and

weeps with them in their sorrows, is also the judge of men and the triumphant conqueror over all His enemies.

(iii.) A difference of teaching has also been urged as separating the two books to an extent which shows that, if St. John be the author of the Jewish Gospel, he cannot also be the author of the Apocalypse. The subject thus opened up is wide ; but it may be sufficient to say that when the Apocalypse is, as it ought to be, interpreted according to the exegetical rules suggested by itself, not only is there no difference in the teaching of the two books : their similarity in this respect is rather their most striking feature. Every one will admit that, in each of the New Testament writers, there is, as we might expect, a type of teaching peculiar to himself. The substance is the same, but the point of view from which it is looked at and the form differ. No one will contend that St. James, St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John are not, in the manner in which they present the truth, clearly distinguishable from one another. Much is the same, but much also is so peculiar to each that we at once feel ourselves entitled to say, " This is his, and no other's ; this is characteristic of one of them, and not of the other three." Bearing this in mind, let us now take the most characteristic parts of the teaching of the Apocalypse, and it will be found that they present a mode of thought differing from that of all the other New Testament writers except St. John ; and, further, not only not differing from him, but resembling him in the closest and most remarkable degree.

The force of these remarks can be fully appreciated only when the doctrinal teachings of the two books are carefully studied and compared throughout. But in confirmation of what has been said, we may refer the reader to the mode in which they present the truths connected with the Person and Kingdom of Christ ; the field of His working, and the work He has to do in it ; the appropriation of redemption, and the relation of believers to their Lord ; the moral freedom of man ; and the final judgment. It is not too much to allege that on every one of these points there is a most singular degree of correspondence between the way in which the author of the Apocalypse and the author of the Fourth Gospel think. We are compelled to come to the conclusion that the former cannot be St. James, or St. Peter, or St. Paul, but that, in so far as striking similarity of thought in two books leads us to identify the same person as the author of both, he may be, and probably is, St. John.*

Enough has been said upon the question immediately before us.

* The similarity alluded to above has been unfolded at considerable length by the present writer in his " Revelation of St. John," 2nd Edition, 1887, in the Appendix devoted to a comparison of the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel. To this he is compelled by want of space here to refer the reader.

External evidence is, by the admission of all inquirers, strongly in favour of the Johannine origin of the Apocalypse. Internal evidence alone occasions difficulty; but the more minutely the book is examined the more do the difficulties suggested either by its contents or their form disappear. We may therefore take the book into our hands, and without hesitation feel that we are listening to the words of that Apostle who was known in the early Christian Church by the beautiful name of *Epistethios*, the leaner upon the breast.

We turn now to the question which most of all concerns us when we take an Apostolic or divinely-inspired book into our hands.

4. *The Meaning.*—In what sense are we to understand the book? What is it designed to teach us? What does it mean? No book of the New Testament has been so singularly tossed about among different and contradictory explanations. It is not wonderful that it should have been so, for the Apocalypse affords opportunities for variety of interpretation such as few books do. The wonder only is that the Church should have so largely acquiesced in this state of matters, and should not have been more impatient of conclusions fatal to the intelligent reception of a book proclaimed by her to be divine. Is there any way then by which we may be guided through the labyrinth, any test that we may apply to determine which of all the varying interpretations has the chief claim on our regard?

We start, of course, with the supposition that each, to a certain extent at least, *may* fairly represent the meaning of the words, and that, at the beginning of our efforts, we are not entitled to put aside any of them as absolutely impossible. Our test, then, is one strictly fair. Does the interpretation we adopt, while violating no law of language, give unity, harmony, completeness, to the book? We have already, it will be remembered, seen that the book is *one*. It comes from one author, and that evidently an author of originality and force. It follows, therefore, from the best known laws of the human mind, that the meaning of the book must be *one*, that every part of it will bear upon one result, and that no part will be inconsistent with the rest. Let this great law of interpretation be fulfilled in the case of any book that we are endeavouring to understand, and we shall have no small reason to believe that we have obtained possession of the key which unlocks its meaning.

Before entering directly upon this, however, there is one pre-possession to which it seems desirable to allude. We are told by not a few leading scholars that it is impossible to listen to any other interpretation of the Apocalypse than that which simply sees in it the reflection of the historical circumstances in the midst of

which the writer was placed. This prepossession must be removed before we proceed further, and it ought to disappear before the application of the rule just spoken of. The simply historical interpretation is not enough. It fails to give that unity and consistency to the interpretation of the book which is the main guarantee of the correctness of whatever theory we adopt. Harnack, one of the latest writers upon this point, has indeed said, "All interpretations not strictly historical must be excluded. The ethico-spiritualistic, rationalistic, and dogmatic explanations, such as were first attempted by the Alexandrian theologians, are fatal to the understanding of the book, as are also the explanations drawn from Church history which were first put forward by Mediæval sects. To see with Hengstenberg 'demagogic' in 'Gog and Magog' (xx. 8), to identify 'Apollyon' (ix. 11) with 'Napoleon,' or in Antichrist to detect the Emperor, or the Pope, or Mohammed, or Luther, or Calvin—these interpretations are not a bit worse than those which turn the book into a compendium of morality or dogma, wherein is set forth by means of imagery and allegories the triumph of virtue over vice or of orthodoxy over heterodoxy."*

Before pronouncing such a judgment it would have been well for Harnack, who is here the representative of many other critics, to have seen that he had himself a consistent interpretation to propose. Even then indeed the author, while dealing simply with the historical facts of his own time, might have beheld in them the deeper meaning which they involved, and might have delineated them, not for their own sake, but for the sake of bringing that deeper meaning into view. The demand, however, which we are surely first of all entitled to make upon those who see in the Apocalypse no more than the counterpart of the political facts of the seventh and eighth decades of the first century is, that the facts shall be correctly stated, or that the book shall agree with the facts. But it does not do so, when we refuse to see in its facts pictures (let them be called "figures" or "allegories," as men please) of deeper thoughts.

Thus, upon the supposition we are now combating, the Anti-christ of chap. xiii. and of chap. xvii. must either be Nero, or, as Harnack prefers to suppose, not the Nero of Tacitus, but the impostor who in the reign of Vespasian raised an insurrection in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, and who, having been for a time supported by Artabanus, who would have restored him at Rome by force of arms, was at last surrendered by the Parthians, about A.D. 88, to Domitian.† Now the great objection to all this is, that it does not correspond to the facts. It has

* In the *Encycl. Britann.*, 9th Edition, "Revelation," p. 496.

† U. S., p. 500.

been far too much overlooked by inquirers that chaps. xiii. and xvii. of our book do *not* proceed upon the supposition of the prevalence of a popular rumour that Nero had not died, but would again return from his place of exile to his old dominion. They proceed upon the supposition of an actual death and of an actual resurrection from the dead. Such an idea, however, had never entered into the popular mind; and, if the Apostle entertained it, he was simply false to the very circumstances upon which it is believed that his whole description rests.

Again, the proposal has been made by Mommsen to find in the second beast of chap. xiii. the imperial representatives in the provinces, especially the Roman Governors in the Asiatic provinces. The proposal is said by Harnack to be "very probable" and to rest "on good grounds."* But can any one who gives due attention to the fact that the Jewish Apocalypticist speaks of this second beast as "the false prophet," and who says of it that "he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men" (chap. xiii. 13), imagine for a moment that a merely secular, not religious, authority could have supplied the foundation of the figure? The thing is impossible. But these Governors were purely secular authorities. If the theory is correct the Apocalypticist is again false to his facts.

Once more, Harnack urges that the three-and-a-half years, so often spoken of, must be taken literally, "The three-and-a-half years in xi. 2, xii. 14, xiii. 5 are taken from the Apocalypse of Daniel, and no deeper meaning is to be sought in them."† In that case, however, the writer, if he writes in the year 68, is not dealing with facts of which he is cognisant; he is predicting; and, if he writes near the year 80, he is supposing a state of affairs at variance with what he must have known to have been the course of history.

The consequence of all this is that nothing can be done to solve the important question of date. Difficulties of one kind or another meet us at each step, and Harnack himself is compelled to resort to the supposition, for which there is not the slightest evidence, that the book, after having been written under Galba, underwent various revisions under Vespasian, about 75 to 79, and perhaps under Domitian, 93 to 96.

Thus it appears that the historical interpretation, in the sense above spoken of, fails to explain the phenomena. It would certainly be no sound argument for rejecting it that, did it afford the only meaning of the book, the Apocalypse would not be worthy of a place in the canon of Scripture. Proof that it is not worthy of its place there is open to any one who can estab-

* U. S., p. 499.

† U. S., p. 500, *note 2*.

lish such a view. Our contention is, that the attempt to interpret it as a writing founded simply on the political or politico-ecclesiastical events of the writer's time, and with no deeper purpose than to describe them, fails. The book ceases to have unity, consistency, and meaning.

Unquestionably it must be admitted that the author wrote from the standpoint of his own age, with its events before his eyes, and with a practical purpose bearing primarily upon it. But that did not hinder him from beholding these events less in themselves than in the eternal principles that underlay them and came into manifestation through them. Nothing is clearer than that he was the child of his time in a sense in which few writers are. Why should he not also be steeped in the principles which had made the past what it was, and which were to form the future? To think that he was so, to think that he cared more for the ideal than the phenomenal, for the deeper meaning of facts than for the facts themselves, is to put him on a level with the highest, not the lowest, spirits of our race, and with all in whom God has most clearly spoken. Then, if proceeding on this principle we find that such an interpretation lends consistency, harmony, unity to the book regarded as a whole, we have every reason to think that our interpretation is true, or that, at all events, it ought not to be put on a level with the absurdities of mediaeval sects.

With these preliminary remarks let us now notice one or two considerations to be borne in mind when we try to ascertain the meaning of the Apocalypse.

(i.) The book is not prophetic in the ordinary sense of the word. It is not intended to set before us any *series of events* which were to occur during the long period known to us, though not to the early Christians, as to precede the Lord's second coming. That it has relation to the future is undoubted. The first words of the book are, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show unto His servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass." But there are two ways of viewing the future. We may think of it as a time when events of greater or of less importance will follow one another in close succession as they have done in the past; or we may think of it simply as a time when certain great principles of God's government will be made manifest by the course of human affairs. A prophet introduces us, at least in a certain measure, to the one, an Apocalypticist to the other. The line of distinction indeed cannot be sharply drawn. Prophecy deals very largely with principles, and to think of it only as prediction is to remove from it one of the chief elements of that inspiration by which the prophet spoke.

Apocalyptic vision deals also to some extent with the embodi-

ment of principles in events ; but this, for the most part, only because it is necessary to give principles, in order that we may *see* them, a concrete form. Though, however, the two methods of revelation have thus a good deal in common, they are in their main characteristics distinct, and we are not to look in the Revelation of St. John for any prediction of events beyond that great event of which the whole New Testament is full—the manifestation of the glory of the now exalted but hidden Lord, together with His complete and final victory over all evil. The Apocalyptic writer, indeed, was hardly in a position to think of any important succession of events. These could not happen without presupposing a long time for their evolution. But no such long time was before his eyes. “The things which must shortly come to pass” were what he saw. “The time is at hand” was the feeling with which he contemplated their occurrence. “Behold, I come quickly,” was the cry which sounded in his ears from the glorified Redeemer for whom he waited (i. 1, 3; xxii. 20). In so far as he thought of time at all he thought of it as contracted, hurried, brief. At any moment the Lord whom he loved, and who was alive for evermore, might appear in glory.

The Apocalypse, accordingly, is only prophetic in the sense in which the great discourse of our Lord Himself, contained in the first three Gospels (Matt. xxiv., xxv., and parallels), is prophetic. When carefully studied in its whole form of articulation and substance, it appears to be simply an expansion of that discourse. We may well suppose that upon no words of his Lord would the “beloved disciple” more constantly or more fondly dwell than upon those which, if they told of his Master’s going away, told not less of His coming again—the Bridegroom of His Church, the Master of His waiting servants, the Friend who united Himself so closely to the humblest member of His Body (Matt. xxv. 1, &c., 14, &c., 40). As he lingered upon the great truths contained in that last discourse of Jesus they took shape in the figures which the Old Testament and his Jewish training had made familiar to him ; and the Apocalypse was the result. We shall be wrong, therefore, if we treat the book as predictive, and if we seek in particular events either of the Church’s or the world’s history for the fulfilment of its supposed predictions.

(ii.) The book is mainly occupied with the enunciation of the great principles which guide the action of the Church’s Lord until the time of His return. It has sometimes been said of late that, after the first introduction of the Saviour in chap. i., we hear nothing of Him again until He comes forth at the head of His armies in chap. xix. There cannot be a greater mistake. The whole book is the action of Jesus, though of Jesus glorified ; and in this respect it corresponds to the Acts of the Apostles

as related to the Third Gospel. In that book the writer looks back to something which he had previously written, and begins what he has now to say with the words, "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up" (chap. i. 1). Thus speaking he indicates by the word "began," that he is about to take up the thread of his earlier narrative, and to explain to us the action of Jesus after He "parted from His disciples and was carried up into heaven" (Luke xxiv. 51). Thus also is it with St. John in the Revelation, and there is no vision of the book in which the action is not that of Jesus glorified.

There is this difference, indeed, that while the Acts of the Apostles shows us, in the events of history, how the great King and Head of all founds and propagates His Church in the world, the Apocalypse shows us in symbolic representation the principles upon which He does so. The latter book thus becomes the emblematic delineation of that great struggle between light and darkness, between righteousness and unrighteousness, between Christ and Satan, which constitutes the essence of the Church's and the world's history. The Church and the world, in its Johannine sense, are fundamentally opposed to one another, and both make ceaseless efforts to rule the heart and to control the destiny of man. We are invited by St. John to take our stand upon a commanding height, and to watch the struggle from its beginning to its close. Nor can it be said that to confine the Apocalypse to this one thought is to give it a field meagre, limited, and at last made tame and wearisome by constant repetition.

Whether we allow it at first or not, this is really the history of humanity as it passes onward to that goal to which all things both around and within it point, and for which "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. viii. 22). There is the mustering of the hosts; there is the shock of battle; there is the deepening eagerness of the combatants; there are angels looking on as well as men; there is the preservation of the righteous; there is the overthrow of the wicked; there are the hallelujahs of heaven and earth as good gains its victory; there are the lamentations of all who had been made rich by the world's dainties as, like a great millstone cast into the sea, "Babylon, the great city, is cast down, and shall be found no more at all" (chap. xviii. 21). The manifestation of principles like these can never pall upon us. They are rather a source of profound and endless interest, until we feel that we can no longer sit inactive spectators upon our height, but must come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty (Judges v. 23).

(iii.) The action of the book covers the whole Christian era from its beginning to its end. Perplexed by such words as those which have been already quoted regarding the shortness of the time, and seeing in the visions of the Seer representations only of events contemporaneous with himself, many commentators have thought it necessary to limit St. John's field of vision to things passing around him at the moment when he wrote. Only a slight inspection of the book is sufficient to show that such limitation is impossible. It is true that St. John did start from the events of his own day, but he beheld in them illustrations of principles which had marked the dealings of God with His people in all past ages of His Church, and which would continue to mark His dealings to the end. That end is constantly before him. It is not reached either in the destruction of Jerusalem or in any prospect of the overthrow of the Roman power. It comes only with the final manifestation of the Lord, with the final judgment of the wicked, and with the casting of death and Hades into the lake of fire.

No events in the previous history of the Church or the world can possibly exhaust the meaning of the visions seen by the Apostle. He passes on through all intervening time to the instant when sin and Satan shall be for ever crushed, and when they who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb shall be confirmed in their everlasting triumph. Other commentators who have felt this have resorted to an entirely different expedient in order to meet the difficulties which beset them. Instead of referring the *Apocalypse* to the opening, they have limited it to the closing years of the Christian age. They have supposed that the Seer takes his stand in the far distant future, and that he deals with nothing but what is immediately to precede the winding up of the present dispensation. This view, however, is not less untenable than the one last mentioned. It is inconsistent with any fair interpretation of the Seer's own language. It renders it necessary to understand such phrases as these, "The things which must shortly come to pass," "The time is at hand," "Behold, I come quickly," as meaning, not that, reckoning from the point at which the Seer stood, they would soon happen, but that when they did happen no more than a brief period would be required for the carrying through of all that was involved in them.

Such cannot be the meaning of the words. If one thing connected with the book is clearer than another, it is that St. John wrote to the men of his own day, that he felt for their trials and temptations and sorrows, and that he designed to show them that there was an aspect of their circumstances which ought to

bring them immediate relief. He has to tell not simply of a righteous order of things to be introduced when time ends and eternity begins, but of the prevalence of such an order even now. The prince of darkness is always opposed by the Prince of Light ; the enemies of Christ, even when they seem to be victorious, can never touch the true life of the children of God ; the righteous are always preserved, and not one of them is lost. These are the lessons which the Apocalypse is designed to teach, and if their consolatory effect is to be experienced they must emerge from the present circumstances of its readers, and not merely from what will be the position of Christians hundreds, or it may be thousands, of years after the date at which the book is written. The indubitable meaning of the Apocalyptic writer is that from the very moment when he speaks the Church may reap the quickening and consolatory fruits of what he says.

Both the views now spoken of must be unhesitatingly dismissed, and the only conclusion left us is that the action of the book covers the whole Christian era from its beginning to its close. At whatever point in the evolution of that era our lot is cast, St. John invites us to behold with him a Divine procedure going on around us which ought to make us keep Christ's works unto the end.

(iv.) Everything contained in the Apocalypse is to be understood symbolically and spiritually. Even did this not appear upon the face of the book as a whole, the writer gives us in one case a clear indication of the principle of interpretation he would have us apply. When speaking of the fate of the two witnesses he says in chap. xi. 8 : "And their dead bodies lie in the streets of the great city, which *spiritually* is called Sodom and Egypt," words clearly showing that, in this instance at least, we are not to interpret literally. Apart, however, from these particular words, literal interpretation must be admitted by all to be at least in the main parts of the book impossible. The only question might be, Whether we are to draw any line between the symbolical and the literal, and, if so, where and how ? No absolute rule can be laid down. The skill and tact of the interpreter can alone guide him. But this much may be said, that where by far the larger portion of the book is symbolical, the probabilities are in favour of the supposition that all is so.

One thing we are at least entitled to lay down as certain, that different parts of the same figure cannot be interpreted upon different principles ; and yet this rule is continually violated by interpreters. What, for example, can be more indefensible than to interpret the "temple" and the "altar" of chap. xi. 1, literally, as if they referred to the temple and altar of Jerusalem

then standing, and in the very same sentence to understand symbolically the words, "measure them that worship therein"? Yet upon this mixture of literal and symbolical interpretation is founded what may, without impropriety, be called the main argument for assigning the book to a date prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. One principle or another ought to be adopted, and to be applied consistently throughout.

To nothing do these remarks apply more than to the interpretation of the numbers of the Apocalypse. The use of numbers, of 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 100's, 1000's, forms one of the most remarkable phenomena with which, in reading the book before us, we have to deal. To connect with numbers thoughts of a kind altogether different from numerical is so strange to us that we have the greatest difficulty in working ourselves into the state of mind which leads to it. That, notwithstanding this, they often have such a force in the Apocalypse can be denied by none; and the old question returns, Is this only occasionally, or is it invariably the case? The same answer as before must be given. To interpret at one time literally and at another time symbolically can lead to nothing but confusion; and unless, therefore, instances can be adduced in which the literal meaning is obviously necessary, it is our manifest duty to abide by the symbolical. What an amount of unprofitable speculation would have been saved to the Church had this principle been adhered to in the interpretation of chap. xx. it is unnecessary to say.

There is, indeed, an idea in many minds that "symbolical" is no more than another name for "wilful" interpretation; that in applying the principle every interpreter is left to the play of his own fancy; and that, when we take it as our guide, we may make anything of Scripture that we please. No idea can be more unphilosophical or more inconsistent with the realities of the case. Symbolical language may be a not less definite exponent of human thought than any other form of speech that we employ. The same symbol may be used, and on the lips of a true teacher will be used, as strictly as any word that literally expresses his idea. The meaning may, in the present instance, be at first more difficult to discover, because in the West, which is so much colder and more phlegmatic than the East, we are accustomed to give much less play to the imagination than is done in regions at once warmer, grander, and more mysterious. But of this we may be assured, that a distinct meaning lies beneath the figures that are employed, and that, even when we may not be able to discover every particular of that meaning, we may at least discover enough to put us in possession of the writer's mind.

Not only in the Apocalypse, but throughout almost all its books, the Bible is full of figures or symbols. The highest truths respecting our Lord Himself are presented to us in such symbols as the Vine, the Bread of Life, the Shepherd of His flock, the Captain of our Salvation. The blessings of the gospel enjoyed by us here; the glory set before us as our reward hereafter; the relation of Christians to their Father in heaven; the influence exercised over them by the Holy Spirit: these and such like truths are almost always symbolically set forth. Between them and the symbols of St. John in the Revelation there is no difference of principle, although the latter are often much more remote from ordinary apprehension than the former.

Thus then we have endeavoured to point out to the reader what may be said in favour of the unity of the book now before him, the interest and importance attaching to its authorship, and the principles upon which he is alike entitled and called upon to interpret it.

Keeping these considerations in view we may now return to the question, What is the meaning of the book? What are we to expect and to look for in it? Did our space permit, it would be an interesting task to dwell for a little on the Gospel of St. John, and to show that in what may be described as the introductory portion of that book, consisting of the first four chapters, the writer prepares us for what he is to set forth in the following and main portion. We should find there traces of all that is to be afterwards unfolded at greater length—Jesus the Son of God, His manifestation of Himself, His struggle as Light with darkness, His preservation from His enemies, and His final victory. It must suffice to say that these things are there, and that precisely the same structure marks the Apocalypse. We have thus a thread to guide us through the apparent labyrinth. For—

(a) We are at the very opening of the book introduced to Christ Himself in His aspect as the Head of His people, of the same nature with them, and of one mind with them. In contrast with the Fourth Gospel, which begins with the Word as God, and then tells us that that Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, the Apocalypse begins with Christ as man. “And I saw,” says the Seer, “in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man” (chap. i. 13), though, as man, raised from the dead, exalted, and glorified.

(b) We are next introduced, in chaps. ii. and iii., to the Universal Church under there presentation given of seven churches of Asia selected for that purpose. These churches are so selected that they present us with a picture of the various elements that make up the Church’s life. We see her in herself and in

her relation to the world ; in her strength and in her weakness ; in her steadfastness and in her declensions ; in her prosperity and in her sufferings ; in her outward poverty and in her true riches ; in the distinction existing between the real and nominal followers of Christ within her borders ; in the just indignation of her Supreme Head against the one, and in His leading the other to the full possession of His own triumph in the presence of His Father and their Father, of His God and their God.

In the first three chapters of the book we have thus the subject of which it is to treat set before us. That subject is the Lord Jesus Christ, not so much in the essential and external glory of His divine Sonship as in the glory belonging to Him as the Head of His Church. In other words, the subject of the Apocalypse is the Church in Christ ; and the object of the book is to present to us a picture of her trials and struggles in the world until the time when, at His Second Coming, her Lord makes His glory manifest, and completes His victory over all her enemies.

(c) The fourth and fifth chapters, again, are to be regarded as songs of triumph sung even before the contest begins, and conveying to us an assurance of what will be the issue. It will not be forgotten that this is elsewhere the manner of St. John. Before the great contest delineated in the Fourth Gospel, which begins at chap. v., we have the victory of the Redeemer over Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, and the Galilean nobleman. When speaking in his First Epistle of the struggles of Christians with the world, St. John uses the words, "And this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith" (chap. v. 4). He does not speak of the weapons with which the Christian soldier prepares himself for the battle, but of the "victory" with which, as if it were his armour, he is from the first equipped. In other words, it is St. John's manner of thought to sing his song of triumph before the fight begins, and that is exactly what he does in the fourth and fifth chapters of the Apocalypse.

(d) At chap. vi. the real drama of the book opens, and from that point onward to chap. xviii. 24, we have before us the struggle of light with darkness and of good with evil. That struggle is mainly suggested by the three series of visions known as the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Bowls (the last being improperly spoken of in the Authorised Version as Vials). As compared with the two series which follow it, the first series, that of the Seals, is general, including, as it does, the dealings of God both with the world and the Church. It carries us onward to the end of the present Dispensation, to the time when that Redeemer whom the world scorned and persecuted, and whom even a large portion of the Church denied, will return, "ren-

dering vengeance to them that know not God and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus," but "to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believed" (2 Thess. i. 8, 10).

After a short interval in chap. vii., in which we have two visions of encouragement and consolation, assuring us of the safety of God's children amidst all their trials, we enter upon the second great series of visions, that of the Trumpets. This series is occupied mainly with the judgments of God upon the world, and it, too, after visions of consolation introduced at exactly the same point as in the previous series, brings us, at chap. xi. 18, to the end, to "the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give reward to God's servants the prophets, and to the saints and to them that fear God's name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth." The third series of visions still remains, that of the Bowls. These Bowls, in which the seven last plagues of the wrath of God are filled up, relate mainly to the Church, and in so far as they tell us of judgment, they apply to the degenerate and apostate Church, that great outward Church out of which Christ's true people have to be called, as His true sheep had been called by Him when He was on earth out of the fold of Israel. We have to do, however, in the first instance with the universal Church, the vine of God's planting, the institution charged to carry on the contest with the enemies of God.

These enemies, then, we ought to know, and hence the position of chaps. xii. and xiii. In these chapters the three chief adversaries of the real kingdom of God in the world are described. The first is the dragon or Satan. The second is the power of the world striving to withdraw our thoughts from the unseen and eternal, and to confine them to the seen and temporal. The third is the spirit of a carnal religiousness, like that which so bitterly opposed Jesus in the days of His flesh, and sought to substitute its superficial and hollow forms for the depth, the sincerity, and the freedom of a true life with God. These two last agencies always work together, and help one another against Christian truth. Nothing so welcome to the mere politicians of this world as a faithless Church which will help them to use men for their own selfish ends. Nothing so welcome to a faithless Church as the honours, the riches, and the spoils which the mere politicians of the world have to bestow.

In this part of the Apocalypse, therefore, the passion of the Seer burns with its intensest flame. The degenerate Church is represented under the figure of Babylon. In quick succession the contents of the bowls are poured out upon her, until she is

cast like a great millstone into the sea; and company after company of those who had been enriched with the abundance of her dainties lament with piercing cries her disastrous and irremediable fate. This series, like the two former, brings us to the end.

(e) Then, in chap. xix. and the earlier part of chap. xx., the King of kings and Lord of lords comes forth in His victorious progress, accompanied by the armies of the redeemed, who ride, like Him, upon white horses, and share His triumph.

(f) In the latter part of chap. xx. and in chap. xxi. to chap. xxii. 5, all Christ's enemies are destroyed, and the happiness of the saints is perfected. Upon the millennial bliss of the redeemed, and upon the glory and happiness of the New Jerusalem, it is not possible to dwell. Suffice it to say that we are to behold in the former a figure of the perfected and eternally secured life of those who not only die but rise with Christ; and that in the latter we have a bright and beautiful, as well as elevating, picture of that new condition into which the followers of Jesus are introduced even on this side the grave, and amidst the labours and trials of their present pilgrimage.

Nothing, we are persuaded, has tended more to perplex the interpretation of the Apocalypse than the idea that that holy city which St. John saw "coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband," is intended to represent a glorious state into which the redeemed shall enter sooner or later *after* the close of their earthly pilgrimage, but before they obtain possession of their eternal inheritance. Taking such a view it is impossible to interpret fairly all the expressions of the passage, while it deprives us at the same time of the thought of those sublime privileges which, as we are everywhere taught in Scripture, are not the future only but the present inheritance of God's children.

It is true indeed that even they who are "in" Christ Jesus are still surrounded by a darkness which has no place in the heavenly Jerusalem, that they have still to shed tears which are there washed away, and that they have still to fear that they must meet that death which shall there be swallowed up of victory. Calling these things to mind it can be no matter of surprise that many have difficulty in believing that the brightness and glory of this celestial city can under any point of view represent an earthly scene through which we are thankful if we may but grope our way, "fightings without and fears within." Yet let them remember that the Christian life has two sides, those two which are brought forward so prominently by the Apostle when he speaks of himself and his fellow ministers "as dying,

and behold we live ; as chastened, and not killed ; as sorrowing, yet alway rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. v. 1, 9, 10). Let them remember that, if the follower of Christ dies daily with his Lord, he also rises with Him daily, and ascends to the heavenly places and is set down there, his life not maintained amidst the things of earth but "hid with Christ in God." Let these thoughts be ever present to their minds, and they will not have much difficulty in seeing that in the description of the New Jerusalem we have the ideal side of the Christian's position, elevated to its highest point and illuminated with its brightest colouring, but still a side that is true to one aspect of his present state.

One of the great lessons of the Apocalypse, indeed, consists in this, that it unfolds such a bright view, not of a world beyond the grave, but of this present world, when we contemplate it with the eye of faith, and penetrate through the veil of sense to the great springs of spiritual action by which it is really moved. It may be doubted if in this respect there is one single picture of the Apocalypse applicable only to the future inheritance of the saints. What is set forth in its apparent visions of future happiness is rather the present privilege of believers, when they look at what they possess in the light of that Christian revelation in which old things pass away, and all things are made new. If we enter upon the study of it with this feeling, and it is a feeling which, as the spirituality of the Church increases, will more and more commend itself to the Christian mind, the visions of this book will be to us what they were to the Apostle who first beheld them. They will give us fellowship on the loneliest rock of the wide ocean of human life, and they will lighten the darkest spots of earth with a heavenly and unchanging glory.

(g) The Epilogue of the book, beginning at chap. xxii. 6, closes all.

THE END.

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